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LIBER REDEMPTOR

THE BOOK

THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT

RE-OPTIMISM

BY A. PRESBYTER

GLASGOW:

JOHN SYMINGTON & CO.

EDINBURGH: OLIVER AND BOYD,

LONDON: WHITTAKER & CO., SIMPSON & CO.,

AND J. G. & F. RIVINGTONS,

MDCCLXXIV.

LIBER REDIVIVUS:

OR,

THE BOOKE

OF

THE UNIVERSALL KIRKE

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TO THE READER.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD, Professor of Divinity in the University of St. Andrews, wrote a book in 1649, "Against pretended Liberty of Conscience," containing many pertinent remarks touching unity; in page 332 of which, the learned Professor thus discourseth,—“And what is the quarrell, but divers religions and waies of worship about Christ? St. Paul exhorteth to christian peace, indeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, not because of contrary religions and many sectaries, called the holy partie, that are to bee tolerated in meeknesse and mutuall forbearance: but because there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptisme, and but one religion, whether Presbyteriall or Independent, and since the apostles and Christ in the New Testament so often recommend peace, and never once insinuate forbearance in diversitie of religion, and all the apostles and apostolike church had but one religion; toleration of many religions not being

a part of the New Testament liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, as is the libertie from ceremonies and righteousness by the law, that the foolish Galatians affected, Gal. v. 1, 2; we conclude there is a law against Toleration of many religions, not any repeating of that law in the New Testament, but divers religions expressly forbidden as contrary to peace, and foretold to fall out as sad judgments." Doubtless our Professor was a wise man in his generation, and a learned, but his censure anent Toleration is rather strong meat for weak stomachs, and difficult of digestion in these days of civil and religious liberty; it savours, too, somewhat of the Vatican. But his commendations of unity are right wholesome and highly to be praised. Wherefore, reader, if you be an admirer of that luminary of the Universall Kirke, you will not fall out with the exhortations to unity contained in this little book. That all may be persuaded to peace and unity, not by the sword of intolerance but by the sword of the Spirit, is the earnest prayer of the author.

WERE a christian traveller journeying in the east, where once flourished the churches founded by St. Paul, to discover in some depopulated regions the ruins of a noble temple of the Lord of Hosts, melancholy musings would fill his mind as he surveyed the wreck of the sacred edifice, where the faithful in the olden time had worshipped the Triune God; and in the mouldering fragments which lay upon the ground, he would see the accomplishment of the threat denounced by the Spirit to the angel of the church of Ephesus,—“Repent and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” And can the christian pilgrim, in this his native land, witness without heartfelt emotions the decay of pure religion, the wreck and ruin of the holy and united household of faith, so beautifully described by St. Paul to the Ephesians. “Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and

are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom all the building fitly joined together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord ; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit."

With this description of the household of God, on the one hand, and on the other, the scattered and dismantled fabric which we see before our eyes in this country, there is a mighty difference.

We see various structures raised for religious purposes. In some the doctrine of universal redemption is taught; in others particular redemption, election, and reprobation. In some the divinity of Christ is maintained, in others it is denied. In some an apostolic priesthood is deemed essential, in others it is thought that any man may take this honour unto himself. These facts are as notorious as that the sun shineth in the firmament of heaven, yet, notorious though they be, they are viewed with indifference, and people hardly think it worth their while to inquire which is the church which the Lord hath founded. Is it not of serious importance to know whether we be in the faith, and whether we continue in the apostles' fellowship, as well as doctrine? All cannot be right, because all are at variance. To me, I must confess, it is a subject of grave and

anxious consideration ; and feeling how weighty a matter it is to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, I am desirous of drawing your attention to it, that you, through the blessing of Almighty God, may discover the true church here on earth.

The first commission given by their divine master to the holy apostles ran thus :—" Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The blessed gospel of eternal life, was, according to the wisdom and goodness of God, to be proclaimed first to the children of the promise, the stock of Abraham ; but they to whom it was offered having rejected the glad tidings, the apostles were then commanded to turn to the Gentiles. They were commanded to preach the gospel to every creature. The Lord Jesus, very God of very God, having accomplished the object of his earthly mission, and having made a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, by the sacrifice of himself upon the altar of the cross, and being about to return to his throne on high, to resume the glory he had with the Father before the world was made, gave to the apostles whom he had chosen, authority and power to raise up into a goodly and firmly compacted structure the

church which he had planted. This second commission was of the most ample kind—"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you, and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." This gift of the Spirit was essential for the work of the ministry. For at the baptism of Jesus the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in bodily shape like a dove; now, as in Christ Jesus dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, this visible descent could not have been caused by any imperfection of His nature, but as a sign or seal to the world of his ministry, and in testimony that God was with Him. So, likewise the same Spirit fell upon the apostles in bodily shape, that the world might believe that God had sent them, even so, and in like manner, as he had sent His beloved Son. And as the chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls was sent to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel, so the holy apostles were commissioned for the same purpose, and also to the whole world: "and God," saith St. Paul to the Ephesians, "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the

knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." This passage showeth that these various orders of the ministry were not extraordinary and temporary, as some would have us believe, but perpetual, and to continue even unto the end of the world as Christ in another place said, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Our blessed Redeemer gave the ministry of reconciliation, personally, to none but the apostles; but the apostles ordained others, and what they did under the direction of the Holy Ghost is said by St. Paul to have been done by God. "And God," says he, "hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily, prophets, thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?" This proveth the diversity or disparity of the priesthood. First in rank, authority, and power, were the apostles; and though they were the immediate and intimate companions of Christ, his privy-councillors as it were, they were not the only disciples, as St. Luke informs us "he appointed other seventy also, and sent them out, two and two, before his face."

These seventy disciples were sent to preach the gospel, and were endowed with miraculous powers, but their ministerial office was inferior to that of the twelve. They received but one commission from Christ, after which, when they had performed their office and returned, we hear nothing more of them in the gospel. They were not present at the Last Supper; neither did they receive from Christ the final commission to preach the gospel to every creature; neither were they with Christ during the forty days which intervened between the resurrection and the ascension. But their inferiority more particularly appeared in the case of the seven deacons:—"The twelve called the multitude of disciples together, and said unto them, Brethren, look ye out seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. They did so, and set them before the twelve apostles, and when they had prayed they laid their hands on them." Here the choice of the deacons was made by the multitude, and the ordination by the imposition of hands, was the act of the apostles alone. I beseech you to mark this: it is distinctly stated that the twelve laid their hands upon the seven; now, had the presbyters or elders joined in the ordination it would probably have been recorded, as they are frequently mentioned in the Acts as being joined in council with the apos-

bles;—and further, observe that the supply of ministers was so small, that a murmuring arose among the Grecians, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations; yet, notwithstanding the apparent exigency of the case, the faithful, among whom were many persons full of the Holy Ghost, did not venture to take upon themselves even the lowest office in the christian church without a lawful appointment and ordination. And they acknowledged the twelve apostles as the only persons invested with authority to ordain, by virtue of the mission given to them by Christ. And if holy and inspired men did not venture to assume any office, without a lawful ordination by authorised persons, how great must be the presumption and sin of modern uninspired men, to thrust themselves into the ministry without a legitimate appointment!—and if any might have urged an inward call, it was they who were full of the Holy Ghost.

But the apostles not only possessed superiority in ordination, they also had it in jurisdiction. Our Lord said to them, “As my Father sent me, even so send I you.” This was not said to the presbyters, for they had no commission at all given to them, but the first, to preach repentance, which was temporary, and expired before the crucifixion. It is evident, then, that there was no parity, no equality, between the

apostles and seventy disciples and deacons, but that the apostolic office was decidedly pre-eminent over the others. Nor was this pre-eminence confined to the divine appointed apostles, it extended to the chief priests of every apostolic church. The same had Timothy at Ephesus, and Titus at Crete, and so it is expressly affirmed by the Spirit to St. John in the book of Revelations, in the case of the seven angels of the seven Asiatic churches. These churches had flourished for many years, (for it was in the year 96 that the apostle had the vision,) and were composed of numerous members and congregations. The prophetic warnings were addressed to one individual called the angel of the church. "This mode of phraseology," says the present bishop of Glasgow, the learned Dr. Russell, "is borrowed from the usages of the Jewish synagogue, where the person who presided in divine worship, usually called the ruler of the synagogue, was not unfrequently denominated the angel of the congregation. He had also under him two classes of ministers, corresponding to the priest and deacon of the christian assemblies." "The seven stars, says the spirit, are the angels of the churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write these things, saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who

walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil, and thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars, and hast borne, and had patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted; nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent; but this thou hast, thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

He writeth not to the presbytery, but to one person who presided over and governed the church of Ephesus; and, moreover, he is called a star in Christ's right hand, but he could not be one of the twelve apostles, for St. John was the last survivor of them; he must therefore have been one who held an apostolic office, a bishop, as a successor of an apostle is now called, and his office was of divine institution. Then it is evident, that though the Epistles were intended for the edification and confirmation of the whole churches, or people of the diocese, with an "Hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," yet the personal direction was not to the whole church, for the church is called

the candlestick, and the superscription of the epistle is not to the seven candlesticks, but to the seven stars which are the angels of the seven churches; namely, the lights shining in the candlesticks. By the angel, therefore, is not, cannot be meant the whole church, neither can it mean a body of inferior ministers, had this been intended, then the superscription would have been to the presbytery of the church of Ephesus. It is plain, then, that by the angel is meant the governor of the church, *i. e.* the messenger, the apostle, one who held supreme spiritual and ecclesiastical authority, one who tried them who said they were apostles and were not, and had found them liars. Had parity existed among the pastors of the church of Ephesus, then they, and not one man would have been the persons to try those false apostles. There is something so peculiarly striking in all that is related of the seven churches, and of the angels who presided over them, as to render them worthy of particular comment. The personal address "to the angel," places it beyond a doubt that he was a supreme spiritual ruler over all the congregations within the precincts of the city. This authority he could have received from no one but an apostle, because at that period when the revelation was made to St. John, A.D. 96, the emperor, civil magistrates, and majority of the inhabitants were heathens, and inimical to Christianity; and as

they actually persecuted the believers of that religion, it would be absurd to imagine that the angel was installed by any civil magistrate into a spiritual jurisdiction commensurate with that which in temporal government appertained to the prefect of the city. But that the angel, whoever may have been the officer so designated, had in the city where he presided a high spiritual authority cannot be denied; an authority not only over the orthodox congregations, but also over all those who had departed from the faith and set up separate congregations. This is put beyond a doubt by the address to the angel of the church of Thyatira, "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess to teach and to seduce my servants, to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." Rev. ii. 20.

This prophetess was certainly a teacher of heresy in the city of Thyatira. She was opposed to the angel. She was not, as people now speak, of the angel's flock. She had thrown off her allegiance and dissented from him, and was drawing away disciples after her. Yet God held her still subject to the angel, wherefore He accused the angel of suffering her to teach, and blamed him for his supineness. But how could the angel prevent her? Secular power he had none; the state had not established nor recog-

nized his authority. He could not, therefore, call in the aid of the civil magistrate to compel her to submit to his jurisdiction, and to cease from her false doctrine. But God exacted this from him. His weapons, then, must have been the anathemas and excommunications of the church; the giving of the refractory over to Satan. And though it may be said that the apostolic was an extraordinary office, and hath ceased, the same cannot be said of the angels, for they were not of the twelve; and moreover, they were in the right hand of God, and who shall dare to pluck them thence? God, then, set up that polity in the churches; God gave the angels and their authority; God appointed their territorial jurisdiction, *i.e.* their dioceses, not the care of one but of several flocks, as well heretics and schismatics as the faithful, both clergy and laity. God held them responsible for the doctrines taught in the territory under their care. God would judge them according to their zeal or lukewarmness, and as the "gifts and calling of God are without repentance," the successors, therefore, of the angels in every age and country, whether supported, established, and endowed by the state, or existing as bishops of a voluntary or even persecuted church, must in all points resemble their illustrious ancestors.

The authority herein committed to the angels, the dreadful responsibility attached to their office, the

warnings and the threats addressed to them whom God had made princes in all lands over his household, are by a perpetual decree passed upon their successors to the latest generations. They who are inheritors of their glory, are of their cares and troubles also. They who sit on their thrones here on earth, if they are faithful and overcome, "will I grant, saith the Alpha and Omega, to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." When I carefully read the account of the seven churches and of their angels, invested by God himself with such matchless power, placed in the heart of a heathen population, officially bound to superintend the doctrine taught by the faithful, and by "them also which said they were apostles and were not, and were found to be liars;" and when we compare with this the opinions and the practice of Protestants, men who vainly pretend that they have erected their churches exactly on a scriptural model, it is truly astonishing to witness the discrepancy. Everywhere the office of an angel or bishop is treated with contempt, and his authority trampled upon with scorn. In England, Henry VIII. transferred from the Roman bishop to himself a share of that spiritual rule which by right appertained to, and had been wrested from, the angels of the Anglican church. In Scotland, a turbulent nobility, and even (*oh nefas*)

some of the presbyters themselves, together with the people, rose in rebellion, and expelled the angels from their churches, and their descendants glory in the crime. They pretend scripture as their warrant; surely, however, in the scripture under consideration neither the emperor nor the inhabitants of the cities founded the churches and gave jurisdiction to the angels, nor had they any to bestow; God had it, and God gave it, and what He planted men have plucked up. But the angels, though spoiled, still exist, and there are a few names, even in Scotland, which have not defiled their garments.

Now the sum of all is, that as God required of the angels a strict watchfulness of their churches, it is manifest that He must also have required at the hands of the clergy and laity obedience to the angels and that they were not at liberty to shake off their fealty and to take the authority unto themselves, for if they might have done this, then God would not have blamed the angel of Thyatira for suffering a false prophetess to teach and to seduce His servants, and that jurisdiction is nowhere declared to have been temporary, nor by any new revelation to have been abrogated. Hear what the Spirit saith unto the church of Philadelphia, “ Behold I will make of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie ; behold I will make them come and

worship at thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." This was not temporary nor local, for the message begins with the warning, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;" and the whole body of Revelation is thus wound up, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Rev. xxii. 18, 19. This denunciation is most solemn and emphatic in its manner, and as to the matter of it, there needeth no comment.

It is difficult to comprehend by what train of reasoning any body of Christians, professing submission to the Sacred Scriptures, can, in the face of this positive revelation from heaven, deny the existence of such a ruler in the church as an angel, or a bishop as he is now called—deny diocesan episcopacy as contrary to Scripture and unlawful—abjure the jurisdiction of a diocesan bishop, and contemptuously administer the blessed sacraments, and preach the gospel in opposition to his authority, most especially when the opening command to the apostle runs

thus:—"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the *things which shall be hereafter.*" Can any expression mark more decidedly the perpetuity of the ecclesiastical polity as then existing in the seven churches of Asia?

I will now examine into the duties of the offices of the priesthood, as set forth in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. To begin with these to Timothy. They inform us that Timothy was ordained by St. Paul. "Neglect not," says he, "the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Again, in his second Epistle, he says, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee by the putting on of my hands;" the gift, St. Paul affirms was given by the putting on of his hands, an expression which is more forcible in the original Greek, "*διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου,*" the preposition "*διὰ,*" meaning through the medium of, while in the former verse, "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," is in the Greek, "*μετὰ ἐπιθέσειως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου,*" not *τῶν πρεσβυτερῶν*, the elders, the preposition "*μετὰ,*" signifying in conjunction with. Thus the *χαρισμα*, or the gift of the Holy Ghost in the ordination of Timothy, for the work of the ministry, was imparted by St. Paul, by virtue of the apostolic power which he had received directly from

Christ himself. The late Dr. Macknight, a minister of the Scottish establishment, says in his commentary, " Since it appears from 2 Tim. i. 6, that the apostle, by the imposition of his own hands alone, conferred on Timothy the spiritual gifts here mentioned, we must suppose that the eldership at Lystra laid their hands on him only to show their concurrence with the apostle in setting Timothy apart to the ministry by prayer." The ordination of Timothy, therefore, according to this learned commentator, was the act of an apostle, not of a presbytery. Timothy was desired by St. Paul to abide at Ephesus. That he was there as an apostle or bishop, is evident from the power and offices committed to him. He was to be resident at Ephesus; and although for the public business of the church, he might occasionally be called away, yet the concurrent evidence of all antiquity informs us that there he lived and died. St. Paul gave him directions for episcopal deportment. He also gave him supreme jurisdiction over all, both clergy and laity. " Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the young men as sons, the elder women as mothers, and the younger as sisters, with all purity." He therefore had authority over the laity. As touching the clergy, he says, " Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses; them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." The Greek word here translated "accusation," (*κατηγοριαν*) signifies an accusation made before a judge in open court. This, then, clearly raises Timothy in authority above the clergy of his diocese of Ephesus. He had no court of presbyters on an equality with himself in power and authority, among whom he sat merely as a moderator or president. Nay, he alone sat upon the bench—he alone was judge—he alone heard causes pleaded before him, received accusations against offending presbyters—and alone rebuked and passed sentence upon them. As St. James, bishop of Jerusalem, declared, "My sentence is," or "I decree," so did Timothy.

His judicial office of bishop of Ephesus or apostle to the Ephesians, is completely established by this; and it is impossible to conceive that St. Paul would have given this power to one individual elder or presbyter of the church of Ephesus, if the divine and recognised system of church government had been at Ephesus or any other Christianized city, that which is set up in these days, and called Presbyterianism, where an ecclesiastical court is composed of presbyters, all of whom have the same rank, and authority, and power, before whom collectively a delinquent minister is tried, and by whom

collectively, sentence is passed, and not by the chairman and moderator, as the annually elected president is called. The office of Timothy was not peculiar to himself, it was the same as that of the seven angels of the Asiatic churches; and if we find in these eight instances, eight persons invested with supreme spiritual authority, and that, over the people as well as the clergy, what conclusion can we draw but that that order or system, universally prevailed over the whole Christian church; and that it did so prevail, even among the most notable heretics, every ancient writer, from Ignatius the disciple of St. John the Evangelist, assures us.

Let us now pass on from this part of the office, which seems to be so accurately defined as not to be mistaken, and let us examine in what other respects it resembles the apostolic. "Lay hands suddenly upon no man," says St. Paul. It will not surely be denied, that this means imposition of hands in ordination; but if so, then we are assured of it in the apostle's second epistle to Timothy—"and the things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The apostle writeth not to the presbytery of Ephesus to lay their hands suddenly on no man, neither were they charged to commit the dispensation of the gospel to faithful men. To

Timothy, and to Timothy alone, was the commission given. He must therefore have been of apostolic rank, for he was empowered to ordain others, even as St. Paul had ordained him, and as the twelve apostles ordained the seven deacons.

We will now refer to the epistle to Titus,—“For this cause,” says the apostle, “left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee.” To Titus, then, as well as to Timothy, the faculty of ordaining and governing was given. He was also commanded to rebuke sharply vain talkers and deceivers, who taught things that they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake; “likewise, a man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.” In these particulars, then, the office of Titus corresponded with that held by Timothy; and in the epistles addressed to them, we find mention of three distinct orders of ministers,—first, Timothy and Titus, apostles, or as they are now called, bishops, clothed with power to ordain the two subordinate degrees of bishops, or elders, and deacons. Of these orders, the apostolic was the highest; highest in point of origin and in power; that Christ Jesus was the founder of it, and that it was to be perpetual, is proved from the words of its Divine Author,—“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” I

have proved that St. Paul the apostle did communicate to others that authority which he derived from Christ, and that he enjoined them also to continue the priesthood by ordination.

Having, then, established three links of the chain apostolic, I shall now proceed to consider the doctrine of the apostolic succession. The apostolic succession is a vital spark, an indispensable essence of the ministerial office, and of infinitely greater importance than the three orders. For whether there were fifty degrees, or only one, it would signify nothing, except their authority had been transmitted to them without interruption from the apostles, to whom alone the Saviour gave power to order all things in his spiritual kingdom. But why should the apostolic succession be called in question? Why should it be necessary to insist upon this in matters ecclesiastical? And why should it appear to any one a non-essential in affairs purely spiritual? In temporal matters relating to government, all things must be done according to law, to render them obligatory; and no one can either frame laws, or put them into execution, except the government of the country, and the officers appointed by the government. Were any one individual to frame a document perfect in all legal technicalities, containing the most wholesome rules and regulations, and to which no lover of order could in

any wise object, yet notwithstanding all these excellencies, it would have no force, and simply because it proceeded not from the legislature, and had not the sanction of the king. All power is, in this country, derived from the established government, and all commissions proceed from the sovereign; and therefore were any private person to call himself a magistrate, or a justice of the peace, and to issue warrants perfectly legal in form, for the apprehension of any criminal, yet would these warrants of the pretended magistrate be null and void, and he would be liable to punishment for false imprisonment: and why? because he had no commission from the sovereign. If, then, in all these cases of civil government, no one can do things in themselves lawful, for to frame laws and issue warrants are all lawful, yet, if one cannot do so without authority from the head of the administration, why should it be deemed justifiable without a lawful calling to assume the priesthood? Nor will it serve such persons to pretend that they have an inward call, for Holy Scripture gives us no example of an inward call, which was not signified by some outward ordination. Aaron and his sons were set apart for the priesthood by divine appointment, and consecrated with diverse rites and ceremonies. Our blessed Lord was consecrated for his ministry by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost. The holy apostles

were consecrated by the visible descent of the same Spirit. They laid hands upon the persons they ordained to the ministry, and this external imposition of hands was a sign of an internal call and mission, and this is authenticated by the cases of St. Paul and Barnabas, mentioned in the 13th of Acts. Upon one occasion, when the Holy Ghost commanded the prophets of Antioch to separate St. Paul and Barnabas for a particular mission, it is said that when they the prophets had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away; and in the following verse it is said, "so they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Selucia." What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder. Where is the man so full of presumption, who dares to compete with Saul of Tarsus in the abundant measure of the Holy Spirit with which he was gifted! If even he, the most laborious of all the apostles, proceeded not on that temporary mission without having been sent, and without the imposition of hands; (not however at this time to ordain him, for he had long before been ordained an apostle) upon what plea, what shadow of a plea, can the modern enthusiast or impostor justify the assumption of the priesthood, the offering with unholy hands the sublime mysteries of the body and blood of Christ?

Thus, in these several instances, deduced from the

Old and New Testaments, appointments to ministerial offices were made by some external and visible rites, that the world might know that they were sent of God. “And how,” exclaims St. Paul, “shall they preach unless they be sent?” “And pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send labourers into his harvest,” was that Lord’s command to the apostles whom he had chosen. Order and regularity are as essential to the body spiritual as to the body politic, and the most endless confusion would be consequent on a promiscuous ministry. In Crete there were Christians in St. Paul’s time, but there being no bishops or presbyters, the church was in disorder, as the apostle writeth, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee.” Paul an apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ had ordained Titus to superintend the whole island of Crete, to govern the church therein-planted, and to ordain presbyters. The apostle during his residence in Crete might have ordained the necessary presbyters, but it appears from his appointing Titus to that work, that he had invested him with apostolic or episcopal authority and jurisdiction. Now I would remark on this passage, that the ordination of these presbyters having been made by Titus alone, unassisted by St. Paul or any other

apostle or presbyters, establishes the position that the co-operation of several presbyters was not necessary in the ordination of these Cretan elders; and though we are not informed who joined with St. Paul in the ordination of Titus, yet in the ordination of Timothy, styled by all antiquity, apostle or bishop of the Ephesians, the imposition of hands was made by St. Paul, conjointly with a presbyteriate; these might have been apostles for any thing we know, for no mention is made of whom it was composed, at all events, in his case a plurality of persons was engaged, whereas in the cases of the presbyters of Crete and Ephesus, only individual persons officiated, Titus and Timothy. I would further remark, that it is the opinion of almost all ecclesiastical historians, that the gospel was introduced into Crete about the year 33, by the Cretan Jews on their return from Jerusalem, whither they had gone up to the feast of Pentecost, and had witnessed the miraculous effects of the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles; and likewise that Titus was left in Crete about the year 62, nearly thirty years after the first reception of the faith. Yet during all that time no ministers appear to have been settled there, and though some might have urged necessity as an excuse for assuming the priesthood, without a lawful ordination, that certainly was not done, for if it had, Titus would not have

been appointed "to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city." From this precedent we may learn an useful lesson, that it is better to tarry the Lord's leisure than to be guilty of an unlawful act, however urgent the necessity may seem. The conduct of the Christians in Crete, during the thirty years which intervened between the first reception of the gospel and the ordination of its first ministry instructs us, that should it please God to deprive any portion of His church of a lawful priesthood, to extinguish the lights of His golden candlestick, to withdraw from the young the sacrament of Baptism, and from the old the sacrament of the Supper, yet, under all these adverse circumstances, though like the Israelites at Gilgal, they be scattered as sheep without a shepherd, and there be no one to offer sacrifice, still should none, following the example of Saul, force themselves and Baptize and offer the emblems of the Redeemer's Body and Blood, but patiently abide until the Lord be pleased to send his own commissioned Samuel for the work of the ministry. Thus did the Cretan christians, and so it behoveth christians of all ages to act. God the Son is the alone and Supreme Head of the church and the Saviour of the body, the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. He still careth for His church, and though exalted to the realms of glory, watcheth with a fa-

ther's care His children on earth, and for His great name's sake will gather together His scattered sheep, and in the time he sees the best, will send His shepherds to feed and to defend the sheep of His pasture and the lambs of His fold. Again I repeat, it is our bounden duty to tarry the Lord's leisure.

In the church of Ephesus then, we find a threefold ministry constituted.—Timothy, apostle, and under him bishops or presbyters, and deacons, to aid him in the work of the ministry. These three orders have always continued in the church, and being of divine and apostolic appointment, are therefore to be maintained. But it appears to me that this number is useful, more for the good governing of the church than essential to its constitution; and I can conceive of a church with only one order of ministers, provided that be the apostolic or episcopal, because a bishop can administer the Sacraments, preach the gospel, confirm and ordain, which two last duties a presbyter cannot do, so that were every parish of a diocese presided over by a bishop without presbyters and deacons, he could discharge all the clerical functions; but then, the labours would be too great for one man, and then we should have parity, and “parity,” said Calvin, “begetteth confusion.” The elevation of one order to superintend and to govern, to watch the conduct, and to take care that the inferior

clergy discharge their duties faithfully, is beneficial to the body spiritual, and being of Scriptural appointment, we may fairly conclude, is essential to good government. In the church of God among the Jews, the High Priest could offer sacrifice and make atonement for the sins of the people, yet the Divine Founder of that church saw fit to appoint inferior priests and Levites to assist the high priest in his labours; for the same purpose, doubtless, were the presbyters and deacons instituted in the christian church, that is to say, a rightly ordained bishop, one whose ordination has descended by unbroken succession from the apostles: for except this be preserved inviolate, though he be called bishop or pope or any other title of dignity, yet is he no bishop nor priest, but only a mere layman—not one of whom our Lord spake when He said, “Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” And as no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that was called of God, as was Aaron, so also Christ glorified not Himself, to be made an High Priest, but He that said unto Him, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee.” The necessity of some order of men to minister in the church has never been denied, except by a few insignificant sects. The point then which is deserving of our consideration is, who they are to whom this power has been given.

We have formerly shown that the persons appointed by our Lord were the twelve apostles; and the appointment bestowed upon them, to the exclusion of the seventy disciples, ought to convince any unprejudiced minds that ordination and all other spiritual ministrations ought to flow from them. The cause why we lay so much stress upon the apostolic succession of the priesthood, is that we may be certified that the sacraments are rightly administered. For we cannot understand how any grace can be conveyed to us in the sacraments administered by unauthorised persons. Any person may acquire by reading a thorough knowledge of Christianity; and a lay schoolmaster may instruct his pupils in all the rudiments and fundamental doctrines of our most holy religion; but he cannot baptize himself, neither would parents ever think of asking a teacher, however learned, to baptize their children. The most ignorant and irreligious of people have implanted in their minds a strong impression of the necessity of baptism. I speak from experience, having frequently met with parents who though living most irreligiously, never entering within the walls of a church, presbyterians as well as episcopalians, yet all extremely anxious that their children should be baptized, and greatly alarmed lest they should die without receiving that sacrament; and with all this anxiety

and fear never venturing themselves to administer it, nor ever taking their children to a neighbour for that purpose, but bringing them to me or to some other minister. Now this is a strong proof that God has fixed in the hearts of all Christians, however depraved, a conviction that some efficacy is to be derived from baptism, and also that the only proper administrator of it is a Minister of Christ. And here, though faintly and obscurely developed, we may trace an outline of the principle of the succession of the priesthood. Why else should they prefer a minister to any other person? If they thought the validity of the sacrament consisted in the mere form of sprinkling water on the child's face, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or even in their own faith in the divine ordinance, parents would not be so scrupulous as to the administration. But no, this is not the fact; they conceive, and justly so, that baptism must be administered by one who has authority in the church of God—not that they discriminate in all cases between a lawful and a pretended minister, between one who has been ordained by a bishop of apostolic descent, and one who has taken the honour unto himself, or is ordained by persons descended from laymen, who have presumptuously assumed the name and office of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God—a sacrilegious act, which the

church of Christ in every age and in every clime hath regarded with abhorrence, and constantly condemned. Against this crime the voice of antiquity has constantly been lifted. The Roman Church to its many errors has added this also, of permitting, in cases of extreme necessity, a nurse to baptize a dying child, when a minister cannot be had. Singular it is that a church which stands so much upon the high prerogatives of the priesthood, should depute to the laity that sacrament which the Divine Head of the church committed only to the eleven apostles. Our church has repudiated that practice; and in its canons and liturgy has strictly confined the administration of that and of the other sacrament, whether in sickness or in health, exclusively to the clergy—rightly judging, that though God hath enjoined baptism as necessary, yet hath not so tied salvation to it as to cut off from the kingdom of heaven, infants who die before it can be administered. In this, as in other respects, our church has followed the usages of antiquity. Hear Ignatius on the subject, an early father, who companied with the apostles: he was bishop of Antioch, and was torn in pieces by wild beasts, for no other cause than being a Christian and a bishop. When that distinguished father of the Christian church was journeying from Antioch to Rome, to seal with his blood his faith in the Saviour.

of the world, he wrote epistles to several of the churches: in one of these to the Church of Smyrna in Asia, are these words, "Follow your bishop all of you, even as Jesus Christ the Father, and the body of presbyters, as the apostles. Respect the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no one do any thing pertaining to the church without the bishop. Let that be considered a well ordered celebration of the eucharist which is administered either by the bishop or by those to whom he has committed it. Where the bishop is, there let the body of believers be, even as where Christ is, there is the catholic church. Without the bishop it is not lawful either to baptize, or to administer the communion; but what he judges right, that also is well-pleasing unto God, that all which is done may be safe and firm." Had Ignatius lived at a remote period from the apostles, and in an age when the bishops of the christian church had great possessions, and were in no danger either of person or property, he might be suspected to have been desirous to lord it over God's heritage. But when we know that he was a disciple of St. John the apostle, and that he flourished at a time when the policy of the Roman government was directed against the bishops, in the vain hope that by cutting them off it might strike terror into the minds of their flocks, and thus destroy Christianity itself, and con-

sequently, had not the bishops been actuated by the purest motives, and believed that episcopacy was essential to the church, they would deserve not the title of saints, but of madmen, for accepting an office which was morally certain to lead only to death, through the fiery ordeal of the most bitter torture; and, moreover, had they usurped an authority over the presbyters and deacons unwarranted by, nay, contrary to scripture, would they, can we imagine, have borne with calm resignation, with a fortitude truly miraculous, the most excruciating agonies which their enemies could invent, confidently expecting when their mortal struggles were over, to enjoy a blessed and a glorious resurrection, and with robes washed in the blood of the immaculate Lamb, to swell the ranks of the redeemed who had passed through great tribulation, and had entered into their everlasting rest? No : in that fearful hour when the hungry lions of Rome's amphitheatre were ready to tear his every limb, Ignatius, had he been an usurper, and the author of falsehood, would have shrunk from the horrible arena. The growlings of the lions panting for his blood, would have been drowned by the fainter, but more awful growlings of his guilty conscience; and the dread of hell's everlasting torments the wages of his imposture, would have whetted the edge of the impending agony. But, conscious of

his own integrity—conscious that he had taught and written the truth only as it is in Jesus—that he had maintained by word, and in his epistles the doctrines of his apostolic masters, death came shorn of its terrors. What though the heathen furiously raged, and the people imagined a vain thing! What though the fiends of hell were leagued to compass his destruction!—calm and serene the martyr journeyed towards the goal of life with a mind unruffled by the insults and indignities of his ruthless guards, unswayed by the tears and sympathies of his affectionate and sorrowing companions, he courted rather than shunned his approaching fate. He rejoiced that he was counted worthy to go to prison and to death, that the world might believe that he had not taken up his cross in vain, nor that his faith was a cunningly devised fable. As his blessed master had bowed his sacred head to his heavenly Father's will, and drank to the very dregs affliction's bitterest cup, so Ignatius was well pleased to be as his Lord. He was content to march in the first rank of the noble army of martyrs. He was content that the thirsty earth should drink his blood, in the sure and certain hope that thence an abundant crop would arise to the praise and glory of God. I am disposed to lay much stress upon the patient endurance of the apostolic fathers, as a convincing testimony to the truth of the

doctrines contained in their epistles. To me it is irresistible. Think of a poor old man tottering on the verge of eternity, his hair grown white in the service of his God ; scarcely known to any save the flock which he had fed with paternal care. No factious rebel was he against the laws and government of his country, but on the contrary, both by precept and example inculcating submission to those laws, and to the wicked heathen rulers—no hill-side preacher of sedition, under the mask of religion, exciting to tumult, war, and strife, a ferocious band of armed malcontents—inflaming them by gesture and by word to maintain by violence and carnal weapons the pure and holy religion of the peaceful, patient Jesus, “Who was oppressed and was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; who was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” Who, when His disciples would have Him call down fire from heaven to consume His enemies, gently rebuked them, saying, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And to Peter, who must needs take up arms in his master’s defence, he said, “Put again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” Ignatius was no follower of Peter in his unconverted state.

Under the cloud of night, in the most secret chambers, even in the very holes and caverns of the earth, the saint-like bishop of the christian church ministered before the Lord. He waged no war against his enemies, he prayed for their conversion. No sword of the flesh was in his hand, or in the hands of the sheep of his flock, but out of his mouth proceeded that which was sharper than any two-edged sword, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. If you would distinguish a true from a false martyr, see how he bears affliction? If he be a follower of Jesus, if the spirit of God abide in him he will be patient and meek; if his enemy smite him on the right cheek, he will turn to him the other also. But if he be a follower of them that are evil, he will not hesitate to make religion itself a cloak for his violence, and a pretext for his sedition; yet such men have been, who are still revered as martyrs. Of the former sort was Ignatius. I shall make one more quotation from his epistle to the Philadelphians, "For all that are of God and Jesus Christ, these are with the bishop; and all that shall repent and turn to the unity of the church, these also shall be of God. that they may live after the example of Jesus Christ. Be not deceived, brethren, whosoever followeth one that createth schism, he inheriteth not the kingdom of God; whosoever walketh by another man's

opinion, he consenteth not to the passion of Christ. Endeavour, then, to use one and the same eucharist, for there is but one body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup, that his blood may make us one. There is but one altar, also there is one bishop, together with the presbyters and deacons; that so, whatsoever ye do, ye may do all according to the will of God." Would Ignatius have exalted the episcopate far above the presbyters and deacons, in their very presence too, conscious that in so doing he was falsifying scripture? I trow not. Would they have submitted to the unwarrantable degradation of their office? Would they have revered the man, nay more, would they not rather have trembled for the ultimate fate of one under the sentence of death, and whom even the prospect of being a prey to savage beasts could not deter from propagating falsehood, nor subdue the proud spirit which led him to bestow titles of honour upon the bishops, disallowed by the apostles, and tending to superstition? I am persuaded—I am convinced of his sincerity. My reason yields to the evidence of these facts; and when I rise from the perusal of his works, I cannot for one instant doubt that all his recorded opinions and precepts regarding the church, were the opinions, not of his own time only, but that they were delivered to him by the blessed apostles, on whom the church

of the living God was founded, and of which Jesus Christ was, and ever shall be, the chief corner-stone. Ignatius wrote not to convince the churches of the necessity of obedience to the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and of the unlawfulness of any other than these administering the sacraments—the Babel of heresy had not then been built, and there needed not many arguments to persuade the faithful of facts and truths not then called in question. But, as a dying christian, it was meet to bequeath to the survivors his earnest prayer and exhortation “to continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayer,” knowing full well that the time would come when “they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears.” Seeing that so great a cloud of witnesses bears testimony both to the doctrines contained in the epistles of St. Ignatius, and also to the genuineness of these epistles, I cannot, I dare not despise them as the opinions of a man of no authority, and in their stead give heed to contrary opinions, broached by men who lived about 1500 years after the apostles, and whose opinions were founded, not on facts, but on theories of their own invention. From what has been quoted from Ignatius, that Father held, as I have ventured to affirm, that the validity of the sacraments consisted in

their being administered by lawful persons: "Let no one do any thing pertaining to the church without the bishop." If it be true, and it will not surely be denied, that people do not generally seek for baptism except from the hands of one who is called a minister, counting the ministerial office necessary to give effect to that sacrament; and if it be true that no layman can administer baptism,—it must likewise be true that no layman can give authority to another to baptize: and if a presbyter has never received authority to ordain, he cannot confer upon others the faculty of ordaining. That therefore which was originally unlawful, null, void, and of non-effect, can never after any lapse of time become lawful. We conclude, then, that baptism, and all other ministerial offices, in order to be effective, must be celebrated by persons whose authority has been regularly transmitted to them from the holy apostles, the only persons to whom the scriptures declare our Lord gave authority. And whoever derives his authority from any opposite or separate source, all the acts which he performs of a ministerial character must be nothing worth. Neither kings, nor magistrates, nor laymen of any degree, not even presbyters or deacons, were ever empowered by God to ordain. The whole question, then, is not whether the Episcopal or the Presbyterian form of church government is the better of the two. But it is, where doth

the ordaining power rest? Where is the fundamental principle? Where the vital spark of the priesthood? We answer, With the bishops, the alone successors of the apostles. And were it even granted, for argument's sake, that the episcopate arose after the death of all the apostles, even this concession cannot benefit presbyterians; for, from the days of St. Ignatius down to those of Calvin, the power of ordination was exclusively exercised by bishops; presbyters never received authority to ordain, but only to administer the sacraments and to preach; so they could not possibly transmit to others a power which they had not themselves received. And I know not that it has ever been asserted by any presbyterians, that any Catholic or Romish bishops ever renounced their episcopate, and, under the name of presbyters, became the founders of presbyterian churches, and thus transmitted the apostolic seed to the present generation. I conceive, could this be established, that any church, though denominated presbyterian, would be entitled to be recognised as a branch of the true church. But if this leaven exist not, upon what grounds, I would ask, can any man claim to be a minister of Christ? Why should we imagine that God, who fixed the sacred offices in the Jewish Church to the tribe of Levi, and to the family of Aaron in particular, would not likewise order the Christian

priesthood in a particular line? The former by a natural, the latter by a spiritual generation. The whole Jewish economy, its priesthood, sacrifices, altar, and festivals, were typical, and shadowed forth better things to come. Now a shadow cannot proceed from nothing, but must be the immaterial representation of some material and substantial body intervening between the light. If we see on a road a shade, we know that it is caused by a house, or a tree, or a man, or some other solid body which the sun cannot penetrate; and if, in order to satisfy our minds which of all these objects has caused the darkness, we trace the shadow from its extreme point down to the end, we shall come in contact with some solid substance which we can handle, and examine, and ascertain the meaning of; it remains while the shadow passeth away. In like manner the Jewish priesthood was the shadow of the Christian. The Paschal Lamb of Christ our passover, and of his representatives, the bread and wine of the holy communion. The altar shadowed the cross on which Christ was offered, and also the altar on which the eucharist is placed. In like manner, also, the Jewish festivals were shadows of the Christian; the Feast of the Passover of Good Friday, the day of the crucifixion; and Whitsunday, which falls out fifty days after the resurrection, and is commemorative of the miraculous effusion of the

Holy Spirit for the propagation of the gospel ; for the purpose of bringing mankind into the church, the christian harvest was shadowed forth by the Feast of Pentecost, celebrated by the Jews fifty days after the Passover, and commemorative both of the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, and also in joyful celebration of gathering in of the fruits of the earth after harvest. All these Jewish services, being of themselves shadows, and temporary, have passed away : we have reached unto the substances from which they emanated, and these shall continue till time shall be no more.

The Aaronic priesthood hath departed, and the Christian hath succeeded in its room. The natural body, which was the Jewish Prelatic Priesthood, is dead, and the spiritual body, which is the Christian Prelatic Priesthood, hath risen to life. “ That which thou sowest ” (saith St. Paul) is not quickened except it die ; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.” Now, the Jewish Priesthood, which was mortal, and propagated by a natural succession from Aaron, is dead and buried ; and the Christian Priesthood, which is immortal, and propagated by a spiritual succession from the apostles, has grown out of, and had

its glorious resurrection from the dead body. Now if this train of argument be sound, by a parity of reasoning, as no ministrations in the Jewish church were allowable except those of the Aaronic priesthood, so in the christian church none can be allowable or efficacious except those of the apostolic priesthood. St. Jude held this opinion. In his catholic epistle, speaking of the heretical preachers of his time, he says, "Wo unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah." The gainsaying of Korah was, he being only a Levite, higher than a layman, withstood Moses and Aaron, and took the priest's office of a sacrificer. Mark you, this was his only crime; he was not guilty of idolatry or of teaching false doctrine; but of offering incense, which office belonged only to the priests. So St. Jude considers that those christians who had been guilty of the like sin were liable to the like condemnation of perishing, even as Korah perished. This is not an opinion of mine; it is the opinion of an inspired apostle, and however awful, being in the Word of God, we must either believe it or deny the Scriptures. It appears to me that from this passage, and from many others, we must conclude that in the apostolic age, the line by which the priesthood was to descend was accurately defined and permanently

established, and that the departure from that line is a sin as heinous in Christians as in Jews. The Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, it may be observed, do not afford us such an accurate account of the government of the church as the present distracted state of Christendom appears to require, and I am inclined to think that this might have been deemed unnecessary, because of the very minute description of the church detailed in the Old. Though the church of the Jews was in many respects temporary, yet its grand features and important doctrines were to be permanent. The rites and ceremonies were to be abolished which were suited only to the times and constitution of the Jewish nation, while all that were essential in religion were to remain for ever, though changed in form, so as to be suited to every age and nation, such as a priesthood, and the moral law, and divine worship. Thus, circumcision may be said not to be abolished, but to have assumed a new form, that of baptism; for as that rite initiated and admitted Jews into covenant with God and made them heirs of the promise, so also, baptism initiates and admits christians into the new covenant, and makes them heirs of eternal promises, the former was, comparatively speaking, a carnal, the latter a spiritual ordinance, and the blessings attached to both were only to be enjoyed by those

who continued faithful unto the end; for as by disobedience many Jews did not possess the earthly, so also, by disobedience shall many christians fail to possess the heavenly Canaan. The same may be said of the paschal sacrifice, which is not abolished but changed in the form into bread and wine; there is the same divinely appointed Supper, but the food is altered—the lamb is changed for bread, and the blood for wine. But the blessings attached to both remain. The eating of the lamb, and the sprinkling of the blood did not, nor ever could, save the Israelites, but faith in the protecting power of God, evidenced by obedience to the command, did save them; so the partaking of the sacramental bread and wine cannot save christians, but faith evidenced by obedience can; for, says our Saviour, “except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” By thus comparing the Jewish and Christian churches, we see the one so blended with the other as to present us with one and the same church, though under a new model, and thus the principle of succession stands out in bold and beautiful relief in government as well as in doctrine.

There is another reason why we do not find in the New Testament the whole economy of the Christian church laid down, (by this I mean by a direct and positive command, that the church shall be governed

by bishops, presbyters, and deacons) it is this; the writings of the apostles treat rather of doctrine for building up believers in the faith throughout all ages, than for the formation of the church; nor is this remarkable, for most of them were written many years after the propagation of Christianity. The churches were then organized and settled; the same system universally prevailed; and when the apostles and evangelists put forth their several writings, the gospel, acts, and epistles, it was not necessary to give directions about the formation of the church, when it actually was formed and personally governed by its founders; but as they could not continue by reason of death, it was requisite, for the prevention of error, to commit their doctrines and precepts to writing. And the absence of any minute details on the subject, affords a strong presumption that they did not contemplate any change of the system which they had every where erected; and as it was much easier to corrupt the truth in its transmission from age to age, than to change the polity, the greater need there was to prevent this by committing to writing what may be called the Christian code of laws, and depositing it with the whole body of believers. We frequently hear of new acts of Parliament for governing the empire, but we do not find set forth in them a description of the government, that it must consist of

the estates of King, Lords, and Commons, this has a long time ago been established, and no one has any doubts upon the subject, and therefore it would be ridiculous to refer to it continually. So it was in the church. The christians had no need to be told how the church ought to be governed, because every member of it knew how it was governed; hence it is the New Testament is not so distinct on the point of government as to satisfy people who are desirous of change; though to me it is amply explicit on the subject. If the evidence of scripture is not so decided as to church government as some people imagine, there is one important matter as to which there is a still more remarkable paucity of evidence, and that is as to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and it is a singular fact, that of the apostles who were present at the Last Supper, when it was instituted, not one of them records the command of our Saviour, "This do in remembrance of me." St. Luke who was not of the twelve, is the only evangelist who does so, and St. Paul who was not even a believer at the time, only once in all his epistles quotes these words in the first to the Corinthians. But are we to infer from the silence of all the apostles who were present at the Last Supper, and from the silence of all the apostles in their epistles, save St. Paul, and that only in one instance, that our blessed Lord did not enjoin by a

command the perpetual observance of the Holy Sacrament of his Body and Blood? God forbid. Or shall we doubt, on this account, that the early christians were in the habit of celebrating the eucharist? I have never heard of any christians who have ever done so, or ever urged the want of testimony as an objection. In order to supply the deficiency on this and on other sacred matters, we must have recourse to the evidence of the fathers who flourished nearest to the apostles; a testimony which we cannot with any degree of fairness reject, and which is, indeed, absolutely essential; for it is to them we are indebted for the preservation of the Holy Scriptures; nay more, it is from them we learn what really is the canon of Scripture; for though the acknowledged books of the Old and New Testaments bear ample internal evidence to their inspiration, yet in not one of them is set forth a catalogue of the contents of the Bible, nor is it any where stated in it, that the canon as it now stands contains all the books of inspiration that ever were written. From the same fathers also we derive the practice of infant baptism, for it must be confessed that the positive evidence of Scripture is in favour of adult baptism; indeed, not one instance of infant baptism is directly recorded; it may be inferred, but it cannot be affirmed of a certainty. From them we learn to observe the

first day of the week instead of the seventh; the express command of God was to keep holy the seventh day, yet in opposition to this absolute command, delivered by the Lord Jehovah to Moses, all christians, without any authoritative obligation for so doing, with one consent desecrate the seventh day and keep holy the first day of the week; and wherefore is it that Catholics, Romanists, and Protestants, receive the canon of Scripture, practise infant baptism, and keep the Lord's day? because, on the authority and the alone testimony of the fathers, we believe that the church hath determined the canon and legislated on these other points. What folly, what absurdity,—nay more, does it not savour of something worse? of intentions, to say the least, far from ingenuous, to believe the fathers in these important matters, and yet to reject their authority as to church government and the apostolic succession. A most unrighteous judge would he be, who, in hearing a cause, rejected some parts of the evidence of a credible witness, solely because it was adverse to his views of the case, and received the statements of the same witness when they made for his wishes. If we are to think the fathers guilty of falsehood and wilful imposition as to church government, may we not as well believe that they also have corrupted the scriptures: or may we not believe, that if these

opinions had not been derived from the apostles, that they would have interpolated the scriptures so as to bear them out in what are now by some termed unscriptural doctrines, and made the language of the sacred volume as strong and explicit as their own writings, for the holy scriptures were in their keeping—the church was the arcanum of the blessed treasure. Cromwell was not so scrupulous; neither the Socinians, nor the Romanists in their several translations. But the holy and venerable Fathers preserved the original intact. For remember that the bible we now have and believe to be the word of God, was not given by revelation at the reformation, but was handed down from age to age, in the original, by the church, in her greatest purity and in her greatest errors. They indeed act with strange inconsistency who accept, in any one particular, the evidence of men who are not to be credited in many statements they have made. In courts of justice, if a witness has been found guilty of giving false evidence in one or two instances, this is thought sufficient to set aside the whole of his evidence, though true—to destroy his credit, and to render him liable to a prosecution for wilful perjury. So with regard to the fathers, we must either accept or reject the whole of their evidence, for we cannot, with any degree of reason or fairness, believe what is agree-

able to our own prejudices, and disbelieve what part is obnoxious to them. If bishops of old had unduly exalted the episcopate, and pretended to authority unwarranted by scripture, wherefore was the Carthaginian presbyter, Tertullian, silent? Wherefore did he magnify prelacy at the expense of his own order? Wherefore were all the presbyters of the universal church, from the days of Ignatius to Calvin, silent? Why did they, the degraded presbyters, not oppose the spiritual wickedness in high places, and with one voice exclaim against the usurpations of the tyrannical lordly bishops? Doubtless they had read their bibles, and there seen these words, "resist not evil;" they had found the doctrine of passive obedience there; they would not have shed the blood of the Lord's anointed. How great has been the glory reserved for Geneva, that to it hath been bequeathed the honourable duty of vindicating the rights of the injured presbyters, and resenting the accumulated wrongs of 1500 years!

I have been thus particular as to the credit to be attached to the writings of the fathers, for we accept the whole of their writings, as to historical matters of fact, while presbyterians accept them only in part. As to their private opinions and interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, these must ever be received with caution, and must be judged as we would judge mo-

dern commentators, by the canon of Scripture itself, though, unquestionably, all persons of sense will pay more deference to the opinions of men who lived near the apostolic age, than to those of persons of our own times.

Having now stated my opinions as to the apostolic succession, the next thing which deserves our consideration is, the practical working of that system, as exhibited in the constitution of some of the distinguished churches of antiquity; but before entering upon this subject, it may be as well first to mention the titles of the priesthood recorded in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament we have the high priest, priests, and levites. In the gospel, Jesus Christ, who, not being of Aaron's family, was an high priest after the order of Melchizedek, the apostles, and seventy disciples; and in the Acts, and Epistles, and Revelations, apostles, or angels; bishops, or elders, and deacons. After the apostles, the titles were bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Thus, though under a variety of names, three orders have always existed in the church of God, and the same ministrations attached to each. Theodoret, an ecclesiastical historian of the fifth century, says, "the same persons were anciently called promiscuously both bishops and presbyters, whilst those who are now called bishops, were then called apostles. But shortly after

the name of apostle was appropriated to such only who were apostles indeed; and then the name, bishop, was given to those who before were called apostles." "Thus," he says, "Epaphroditus was the apostle of the Philippians, and Titus the apostle of the Cretans, and Timothy the apostle of the Asiatics." St. Ambrose, likewise, says, "that all bishops were called apostles at first, and therefore," he says, "that St. Paul, to distinguish himself from such apostles, calls himself an apostle not of man, nor sent by man to preach, as those others were who were chosen, and sent by the apostles to confirm the churches." And again he says, "they who are now called bishops were originally called apostles, but the holy apostles being dead, they who were ordained after them to govern the churches, could not reach unto the excellency of those first apostles; nor had they the testimony of miracles, but in many other respects were inferior to them; therefore they thought it not decent to assume to themselves the name of apostles; but dividing the names, they left to presbyters the name of presbytery, and they themselves were called bishops." There is one striking remark in this passage which I cannot refrain from observing upon. St. Ambrose says "that the bishops of his time had not the testimony of miracles." Yet the Romanists pretend to miracles. We hear, even now,

of their priests working miracles. If so, then this gift must have been bestowed upon them after St. Ambrose died, for surely had they been wrought in his time, he would not have denied a fact which would have raised the dignity of his order, and given it greater weight among men: this is one among many other incidental testimonies against Roman corruptions and inventions. But to proceed; I shall cite St. Jerome, who is supposed to have written somewhat in favour of parity, though no father of the church appears to me a greater advocate for episcopacy. "Wheresoever," says St. Jerome, "a bishop is, whether at Rome, or Eugubium; at Constantinople, or at Rhegium; at Alexandria, or at Tennis, they are all of equal merit; their priesthood is the same; they are all successors of the apostles." But, say the advocates of parity, the apostles had no successors. Dr. Campbell, in his lectures, says, "the indispensable requisites in an apostle sufficiently demonstrate that the office could be but temporary. It was necessary that he should be one who had seen Jesus Christ in the flesh after his resurrection." But where is this stated in the scriptures? Nowhere that I can find. The doctor assumes it from Acts i. 21, 22—"Wherefore, of these men, which have accompanied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of

John, unto the same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." It is, certainly, assuming rather too much, to say that these are the essential qualifications of all apostles. St. Peter was then speaking of a successor to Judas Iscariot, and mentions the qualifications requisite for one who was to fill a vacancy in the sacred college. But, in point of fact, neither Judas nor any of the twelve apostles could have any successor, if it was required that he should in all points closely resemble them, for none but they were present at the last supper, and to the eleven only was the commission to preach the gospel given,—not to Matthias, for he was not chosen till some time after the ascension. And even granting Dr. Campbell's hypothesis to be true—"that it was necessary that he should be one who had seen Jesus Christ in the flesh, after his resurrection," this is all in favour of, instead of being against the apostles having successors. According to this, Mary Magdalene was qualified to be an apostle, for Jesus appeared first to her. And St. Paul says, he "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once," 1 Cor. xv. 6. Here, then, by the learned principal's standard, there could be no lack of successors to the apostles, for St. Paul tells us of above five hundred who had seen the Lord after his resurrection. But it is evident, from the

express words of the commission given to the eleven apostles, that they not only should have successors, but that they were to continue for ever,—“Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Now, the very terms of this commission are not extraordinary, but ordinary. What are they commanded to do? To make converts or disciples to the christian faith; to baptize them, and then to teach those disciples; this is the sum and substance literally of the divine commission to the eleven apostles. Can any, then, think, who calmly considers the subject, that theirs was an extraordinary office, and hath ceased? the concluding words disprove this, for they are, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” The apostles are long since dead; they did not preach the gospel actually to all nations; they could not, then, be applied to the apostles personally, but to their successors. The title of apostle was not, even in the scriptures, confined to the twelve, for Barnabas was called an apostle, so were others. St. Paul says, 2 Cor. viii. 23, “Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you; or

our brethren be inquired of, they are the apostles (*αποστολοι*) of the churches, the glory of Christ." And again he says, Phil. ii. 25, " Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your apostle, (*ὁ μὲν δὲ ἀποστολόν.*") In our translation the words are the messengers of the churches, and your messenger ; but in the Greek they are apostles. Besides, St. Paul, Gal. i. 1, says, " Paul an apostle, (not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ,") plainly indicating that there were other apostles besides those who, like himself, had received their mission directly from Christ. Had the word apostle signified one only who had been sent by Christ, there would, I conceive, have been no necessity for his saying that he had not been sent of men, nor by men, *οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου.*

I have been thus particular about the name, because some people lay much stress upon the name ; but to me this appears to be a matter of the most absolute indifference : Christ calls himself the way, the door, the good shepherd ; but how ridiculous would it be hence to conclude, that he was a road, an actual door made of wood or iron, or a person whose sole occupation it was to watch a flock of sheep. All we contend for is, that our blessed Lord left upon the earth twelve men, whom he was pleased to call apos-

tles, whose duty it was to lay the first foundations of the christian church, and also to govern it, and that after their decease, other men were to succeed them in their duties of extending the faith and ruling the church, both clergy and laity; and also, that the Holy Scriptures inform us that such vocations belonged to Timothy, and Titus, and others, be their names what they may.

Our blessed Saviour thus describes himself: "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep." St. Paul, likewise, declared to the elders of Ephesus, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." With these divine and apostolic warnings before them, the early christians had good reason to be upon the watch, to examine, and to prove upon what authority their spiritual instructors ministered among them.

The scriptures must then, necessarily, have been in the hands of a very few before printing was invented, and the clergy, being as it were, in a great measure, the custodiers of scripture, the people had the greater cause to search with the utmost caution into the warrant of their teachers, lest they should be wolves in sheep's clothing, and bring in damnable heresies among them. This gives us a key to the remarks of Tertullian to the heretics of his time. He was a presbyter of Carthage, and lived about the close of the second century. In the thirty-second chapter of his book of prescriptions against heretics, he says, "let them declare the original of their churches, and give us a catalogue of their bishops in an exact succession from the beginning; that this first bishop of theirs had an apostle, or apostolic man that never separated from the apostles, for his author, or immediate predecessor; for after this manner do the apostolic churches make their reckonings, as the church of Smyrna has Polycarp, placed there by St. John; and the church of Rome has Clement, ordained by St. Peter, and so all other churches in like manner exhibit their first bishops ordained by the apostles, by whom the apostolical seed was propagated and conveyed to others." In that early age of the church, when men had nothing to gain in this world from embracing the christian faith, but on the contrary, when

the loss of worldly substance fell to their lot, accompanied by persecution and death in every appalling form, they naturally clung with love, almost with veneration, to their spiritual pastors, especially to their bishops. For, as the sharpest weapons of the heathen were generally pointed against them who were the chief captains in the noble army of the faithful, the episcopal throne was not coveted for its eminence, but was ascended by men who were prepared to risk every danger rather than abandon the faith: and as the crown of martyrdom was usually bestowed upon these intrepid champions, can we imagine that the flocks whom they had tended with paternal solicitude would soon forget their honoured sainted names? No: they lived embalmed in their memories, and this, though not the only motive, yet was one motive for preserving a register of their bishops. I now pass on to a brief account of some of the apostolic churches, that we may trace from the beginning the formation and constitution of the churches planted by the apostles; and let me beseech you to lay aside all prejudice, and attend to historical evidence. If the early ecclesiastical writers are to be listened to, when they treat of grave matters touching the essential doctrines and usages of the church, they surely demand a patient attention and regard in treating of its polity; for I cannot conceive what motives they

could have in writing falsehood. I shall begin with Jerusalem, which was the mother of all churches. In using this expression I not only state a well known fact, but I also adopt the language of the catholic church. I find in Theodoret an epistle addressed by a council of bishops, assembled at Constantinople, to the bishop of Rome, and some other bishops, in which letter, (written about the year 381) these words occur:—"We acknowledge the most venerable Cyril, most beloved of God, to be bishop of the church of Jerusalem, which is the mother of all churches." This is catholic: but what says Pius IV., bishop of Rome—"that they are to be accursed who deny that the church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all churches." This is Roman doctrine. It is an insult to our understanding to bid us deny that Jerusalem is the mother of all churches, for there the sacrifice of the cross was made. There the apostles were commanded to remain till the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, should perfect them for their mission. There Matthias and the deacons were chosen and ordained; and there the first councils of the church were convened. Of the church of Jerusalem, James, the Lord's kinsman, was appointed the first bishop. At a great assembly of apostles and presbyters holden at Jerusalem, James presided, and after several had spoken, he concludes

by saying, "wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God." My sentence, every Greek scholar knows is something more than my opinion, it is *ἐγὼ*, I decree, I as a judge deliver my sentence. It is, besides, the unanimous opinion of all antiquity, that James was the first bishop. St. Jerome says that he was ordained of the apostles immediately after our Lord's crucifixion. Epiphanius, therefore, calls him the first bishop. Eusebius in several places speaks of him as first bishop of Jerusalem, ordained by the apostles. St. Clement, ordained by St. Peter, says, "that this was designed as a peculiar honour to St. James, in regard to his being the brother of Christ; for though our Saviour usually gave the preference to Peter, and John, and James his brother, yet none of these contended about this honour, but chose this James, surnamed the Just, to be bishop of the place, where he lived a saint and died a martyr." The learned Dr. Macknight, in his preface to his commentary on the catholic epistle of St. James, writes thus, "that one of the apostles should constantly reside at Jerusalem, to whom the faithful might apply for advice in any difficult case, was very proper, because circumstances might make it necessary for the greater part of the apostles to leave Jerusalem, and go to other countries. Wherefore, as James the Lord's brother was

a person of singular prudence, and great authority, as well as an apostle, he was well qualified for that important station, and may have been appointed to it by common consent; and as any apostle, by virtue of his superior character and illumination, had a right to direct the affairs of the church where he happened to reside, the apostle James, by constantly residing in Jerusalem, became the perpetual president and director of the church there; on which account the ancients called him the bishop of Jerusalem." These remarks of the learned doctor appear in favour of diocesan episcopacy, and that too, established in the very beginning of the christian era by the apostles themselves, and over the large and populous city of Jerusalem, where, at that time, there must have been many congregations; for, on the day of Pentecost, it is related in the Acts, that three thousand were added to the church, and shortly after that, five thousand more were converted by the preaching of St. Peter. Now, when we take into consideration the sudden conversion of eight thousand Jews, and having no places to assemble in for divine worship, except the houses of some of the chief converts, and were we to allot two hundred to each house, then we should have forty congregations, over all of which, Dr. Macknight says, St. James was the perpetual president and director. Not that

he ministered personally to all of these, but that he was the overseer or bishop of those who did, and with his council of presbyters, superintended, directed, and governed the church; and as he was raised to that dignity by the apostles, surely we cannot say that such a form of church government is unscriptural and antichristian.

Some time after the martyrdom of St. James, Eusebius, on the authority of ancient records, informs us that the apostles and disciples of our Lord, as many as were in being, met together with our Saviour's kinsmen, (several of whom were still alive) to consult about choosing a successor in the room of St. James, and they unanimously agreed upon Simeon, son of Cleophas, our Lord's cousin according to the flesh, thinking him the most fit and worthy person to fill the episcopal chair. That the supreme government of the church was by our blessed Lord laid upon the shoulders of the apostles, is an undeniable fact. That it is apparent from the scriptures, and is confirmed by the unanimous consent of all antiquity, to which a presbyterian minister agrees, that the college of apostles, for the sake of good government, appointed one of their number as perpetual president and director, is a well authenticated fact. St. James, then, was bishop of Jerusalem, as well as an inspired apostle. In spiritual gifts he was

in nothing superior to the rest of the apostles, but in jurisdiction within the precincts of the holy city, he was their superior, as is more than implied by various passages. St. Paul says, when Peter was come to Antioch, before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles : again, Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present : and when St. Peter was delivered out of prison, he said, go show yourselves to James, and to the brethren. The degree of James's jurisdiction within his diocese is nowhere laid down ; but we cannot suppose it to have been inferior to that committed to Timothy, viz., to ordain, to govern, to teach, and to judge. St. James had received power to bind and to loose as well as Peter and the other apostles, but were we to adopt the presbyterian notion, that the churches were under one presbyterial government, then his power must have been inferior both to that of Timothy and Titus, and of the angels of the seven Asiatic churches ; and instead of possessing in himself, solely and independently, the power of the keys in Jerusalem, he must have shared that power with the presbyters or elders, to whom Christ had not committed it. We are all of us more or less the creatures of habit, and the slaves of prejudice, and it is with the utmost difficulty we can resign customs and opinions to which we have been attached from infancy, and to

which we attach much importance. Even after the resurrection, the holy apostles could not, for a long time, master their prejudice against communicating with the Gentiles; and it was only by the force of an express revelation from heaven, the vision of the sheet, that St. Peter was induced to go to Cornelius, a Roman soldier. And even granting, for the sake of argument, that episcopacy was not divinely appointed, I know not how the apostles, consistently with their national prejudices, could have invented parity, or presbyterianism.

From the days of Moses, prelacy had always existed among them. They knew no other system; they saw no other; they had read of no other. Prelacy was the order of their church; it had its levites, its priests above them, and its high priest superior to both; and these three orders this episcopacy or prelacy was ordained of God himself. How then could it ever enter into the hearts of the apostles to conceive a church government the very reverse of all this? How, without an express command from God to that effect, could they have rushed from this system, and invented one so contrary to their experience, so obnoxious naturally to all their notions of an ecclesiastical constitution?

The church next in importance which demands our notice, is the Church of Rome. All ancient

writers seem agreed as to the fact that this church was founded by St. Peter and St. Paul, and that the three bishops who succeeded after them were Linus, Anan- cletus, and Clement. "If the order of bishops suc- ceeding one another," says St. Augustine, "be of any consideration, we take the surest and soundest way who begin to number from St. Peter; for Linus succeeded Peter, and Clemens Linus, and Anancletus Clemens. This Clemens is the same mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians, whose name was in the book of life. The Church of Antioch was governed first by Euodius, next by Ignatius, ordained by the apostles: Polycarp presided over Smyrna. ordained by St. John the apostle; and Timothy and Titus respectively ruled over Ephesus and Crete." Such are the names of some of the churches planted by the apostles.

The next part of the subject which deserves our attention, is the mode of government pursued in them, as handed down to us by the fathers of the church. I shall proceed at once to the testimony of St. Jerome, and this because he is generally reputed to be somewhat in favour of presbyterianism, but with what reason you shall hear. In his comments on Titus i. 5, he says, "Before such time as, by insti- gation of the devil, factions or parties were made in religion, and people began to say, I am of Paul, and

I of Appollos, and I of Cephas, the churches were governed by the common council of presbyters: but afterwards, when every one accounted any whom he baptized to be his own, and not Christ's, it was decreed through the whole Christian world that one chosen out of the presbyters should be set over the rest, unto whom the care of the church should belong, that the seeds of schism might be taken away." I cite this passage because by some it has been considered favourable to presbyterianism; by those it has been said that St. Jerome inferred that the pre-eminence of bishops above presbyters, is owing more to the custom of the church than to the command of Christ. To this opinion I cannot assent, because, were this interpretation a correct one, we must come to this conclusion, that our Saviour had instituted parity, but that in a few years after its institution, that system was, by the universal experience of all Christians, found so faulty and imperfect, and so liable to produce schisms, that it was speedily abolished, and episcopacy established in its room: in short, that the divinely appointed government by presbyters did not work well, and that episcopacy, invented by man, was deemed necessary to amend what God had founded. How can we for one moment entertain such a monstrous notion as this, that the wisdom of man was greater than the wisdom of God? It is

great presumption to express, or even to harbour such an imagination. St. Jerome held no such opinion, as we gather from other parts of his works. In his 85th Epistle to Evagrius, he says, "That bishops, presbyters, and deacons are, in the New Testament, correspondent to high priests, priests, and levites, in the Old Testament;" "and what," he asks, "is it a bishop can do but what a presbyter may do, except ordination?" Again he says, "the welfare of the church consists in the dignity of the high priest, to whom, if some matchless power be not given, there will be as many divisions in the church as there are priests." The meaning of the father seems to be this, that in the days of the apostles they personally governed the churches which they had planted; not that they constantly resided at any particular place, but appointed presbyters and deacons to discharge the ordinary duties of the ministerial office; while they, the apostles, occasionally visited them, to exercise their functions of ordination and confirmation, which, as we learn from the Scriptures, were the peculiar prerogatives of the apostles. But when the apostles knew that their warfare on earth was nearly accomplished, they ordained others in their room, as they themselves had been ordained; and bequeathed to them the authority which their Divine Master bestowed upon them; "and the reason was," says St.

Jerome, "that the seeds of schism might be taken away." The holy father, methinks, had no very exalted opinion of parity, if, as he declares, that even in the apostolic age it became the fruitful source of schism, the prolific mother of faction and dissent; if the result was such a degree of spiritual pride as to induce the ministers of Christ to call their disciples and converts after their own names.

The sum of all we gather from the evidence of St. Jerome is, that parity was of short duration, and that it expired before the apostles were dead. We learn from St. Ignatius, who was martyred in the year 107, that episcopacy was the order of ecclesiastical regimen in his time; and as he died about nine years after St. John the Evangelist, there is strong presumptive evidence that the change, if there was any change, took place in the life time of the last of the apostles; and this appears to me to be farther established by the description of the Asiatic churches of the Revelations.

Let us now examine into the duties which appertained unto bishops, to presbyters, and to deacons. The bishop was a supreme pastor of a church; to him a portion of the flock of Christ was committed; but as he could not conveniently perform all the duties of his high and holy office, he entrusted part to presbyters and deacons,—such as the administra-

tion of the sacraments, preaching, and visiting the sick—in the same manner as presbyterian ministers resign some parts of the pastoral duties to lay elders. But there are two functions which the bishops never deputed to the inferior clergy,—the laying on of hands in confirmation and ordination. These, from the days of the apostles, have always been discharged solely by bishops. Confirmation, or the laying on of hands, is a rite of great antiquity, being founded on the example and practice of the apostles, as is proved by three passages of Scripture: in the viii. chap. of the Acts it is stated that Peter and John were sent down from Jerusalem to Samaria, to confer, by the laying on of hands, the Holy Ghost on the disciples whom Philip, the deacon, had baptized. In the xix. chap. when St. Paul, for the same purpose, laid hands upon those who had merely been baptized; and in the vi. chap of Heb., where St. Paul speaks of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands as among the principles of religion,—St. Cyprian deduces it from the apostle's laying on of hands on the Samaritians. “The same custom,” says he, “is now observed in the church, that they who are baptized are presented to the governors of the church, that by their prayers and imposition of hands they may receive the Holy Ghost.” St. Augustine says that “this rite descended from the apostles, who prayed

over those on whom they laid their hands, that they might receive the Holy Ghost." I am conscious that many persons in this age, who have not a lively faith in the ordinances of God administered by uninspired men, deny the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and also that any grace is conferred through the imposition of hands of the episcopate: to such I would offer in reply the words of St. Augustine,—“In propriety of speech,” says that father, “neither the apostles nor any other men, but Christ alone as he is God, could give the Holy Ghost; for the apostles only laid hands on men, that the Holy Ghost, by their prayers, might descend upon them—which custom the church now observed and practised by her bishops and governors also.” Our blessed Redeemer hath promised that our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Shall, then, the servant of Christ, when he standeth ministering at the baptismal font, or at the altar, and prayeth to his heavenly father to fulfil the promise of his only begotten Son; shall he hesitate to believe that God will ratify his ministerial acts by pouring down the holy sanctifying spirit upon the infant on whom he poureth the waters of baptism, or upon the adult on whom he layeth his hands? We expect it not from any personal merits of the priest, but we have respect unto the promise of God. Faith assures us that God

is not a man that he should lie. We remember the holy promise which he made unto his apostles, to send the Comforter to abide with them for ever. We believe that his prayers will be heard and answered, and the Holy Spirit bestowed.

Next to the power of confirmation, ordination belonged exclusively to bishops as successors of the apostles. There is not, in the compass of the New Testament, one single instance of ordination having been performed by any other than apostles. Matthias was ordained directly by God. The seven deacons by the twelve apostles; and of his own ordination, St. Paul says, Gal. i. 1,—“ Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.)” The gift of the spirit in ordination was given to Timothy, by the laying on of the hands of St. Paul. Timothy was commanded, himself, and alone, to lay hands suddenly on no man; and Titus, alone, and without any coadjutors, was left in Crete to ordain elders. While the inspired writers leave us entirely in the dark as to the ordinations of Barnabas, Titus, Epaphroditus, and the seven angels, they, at the same time, are equally silent as to a single instance of ordination by presbyters: not one have they recorded, so that whoever would advocate that system, cannot have scripture for his warrant; and I fear the fathers wont greatly

help him out of his difficulty. Yet the apostolic office, it is said, hath ceased, and determined: it died with St. John, for he was the last of the sacred college—then the lights of the world were put under an everlasting extinguisher. What! the very order which the Emmanuel God with us instituted? The only ministry which he ordained, and promised to abide with for ever,—is it not talking profanely, to say that that office, which the Everlasting declared should be everlasting, is no more—hath been buried, and hath tasted of corruption? No! God forbid. Corruption hath seized upon the priesthood of Aaron's line—but that which is of the order of Melchisedec, shall endure “till the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heaven shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree.” Isa. xxxiv. 4.

Jesus Christ, the scriptures tell us not, ever appeared upon the earth again after his ascension, save to Saul of Tarsus, as he journeyed to Damascus. He came not when the beloved disciple entered into his rest, for the purpose of giving a new commission, and that to presbyters. This would argue that the apostolic office had been weighed in the balance and been found wanting; that the presbyteriate was the pure gold tried in the fire, which never could decay. To

me, I must confess, it savours somewhat of irreverence to imagine the extinction of the holy order of apostles whom God, and not man, hath set in his church. St. Paul calls them the foundation of the church : well then, undermine that foundation, what will become of the superstructure? it must fall, and great will be the fall thereof,—its walls will be rent, and the fragments thereof the spoilers will carry away, and it shall become utterly desolate.

The apostolic succession is distasteful to the Romanists also, if the Cardinal Bellarmine speaks the sentiments of his church. “Bishops,” says that celebrated bulwark of the papacy, “are not properly the successors of the apostles, because the apostles were not ordinary, but extraordinary pastors, such as from the nature of their delegation could have no successors.” And why did it suit the Cardinal thus to express himself? Simply because the apostolic succession is an axe at the root of papal supremacy; for if all bishops be successors of the apostles, then are they the bishop of Rome’s equals; and then the monopoly of granting mission to all bishops is wrested from the sovereign pontiff, because the word of God declares that Timothy and Titus derived their mission not from St. Peter, but from St. Paul. The truth is, the divine doctrine of the apostolic succession, and the authority of bishops in the church of

God, builded upon that succession, are against Roman tyranny, and therefore Rome is against them. Thus, then, we find (strange union indeed) the advocates of parity, and the advocates of papal supremacy, with hand joined in hand, endeavouring to hew down the authority of the apostles' successors, because it is a barrier in the way of their favourite schemes of church government. But to return. Since the scriptures withhold us from affirming that ordination is the act of the presbytery, or that mission must be derived from the bishop of Rome as St. Peter's successor, let us ask of the Catholic fathers their opinions, and we shall hear if they favour Rome and Geneva.

“What is it,” says St. Jerome, “a bishop can do, but what a presbyter may do, except ordination.” St. John Chrysostom says the same thing, when exalting to the utmost the office of the presbytery—“Bishops and presbyters differ not much from one another, for presbyters are admitted to preach, and to govern the church; and the same qualifications that the apostle requires in bishops are required in presbyters also. For bishops are superior to them only in the power of ordination, and have that one thing more than they.” In another place he proves that “Timothy was a bishop, because the apostle speaks of his power to ordain, bidding him lay hands

suddenly on no man." But why should I cite individual fathers, when the universal church, by the voice of the canons of councils general and provincial, ordain ordination to be by bishops; and without as well as within the church, the same system prevailed, as we read of the heretic and schismatic Novatian, in the third century, conforming to the same rule, by inducing three Italian bishops to ordain him bishop of Rome, in opposition to Cornelius the canonical bishop. Not only did Novatian comply with the universal custom, but so also did all heretical congregations after him till the days of Calvin, and there exists not any record of a church which, previously to his time, was not governed by bishops. The Arians and Donatists had their bishops as well as the Catholics. So contrary to the practice of the catholic church was ordination by presbyters alone, that it was always set aside as unlawful; as in the case of Ischarus, who was deposed by the synod of Alexandria, because Colluthus who ordained him was no more than a presbyter, though pretending to be a bishop; and in the case of those presbyters who were reduced to the rank of laymen by the council of Sardica, because Eutychianus and Musæus who ordained them were only pretended bishops. The council of Seville, in Spain, deposed a presbyter and two deacons, because the bishop only laid his hands

upon them, while a presbyter pronounced the consecration prayer over them. From what has been said, it appears that the ministerial office of a bishop was superior to that of a presbyter in the duties of ordination and confirmation ; in other respects they were upon equality, only with this difference, that presbyters could not perform any clerical duty without permission from the bishop. "It is not lawful," says St. Ignatius, "either to baptize or to administer the eucharist without the bishop, but that which he allows is well-pleasing to God;"—"And," says Tertullian, "the right of baptizing belongs to the chief priest, who is the bishop, and after him to presbyters and deacons, yet not without the authority of the bishop, for the honour of the church, in the preservation of which consists the church's peace." The office of deacon was inferior to the other two; to the deacons it belonged to assist the bishop in administering the holy communion, but never to consecrate the elements. They also, as Tertullian informs us, carried the consecrated bread and wine to the sick who were hindered from communicating publicly with the faithful. I shall sum up this account of the three sacred orders with a passage from the epistle of St. Ignatius to the church in Tralles. "It is, therefore, necessary that ye do nothing without the bishop, even as ye are wont : and that ye also be subject to

the presbytery, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ, our hope, in whom if we walk we shall be found in him. The deacons also, as being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must by all means please all. Without these there is no church." These words of the apostolic father cannot be misunderstood; and written, as they were, under the most awful circumstances in which a man can be placed—when the sentence of a horrible death was passed upon him, and he on the road to execution, cannot be contemptuously rejected. They stand not alone the uncorroborated opinions of a gloomy zealot, nay, for fifteen hundred years have they been ratified and confirmed by the public decrees of the universal church, and by the private writings of the most distinguished and learned of her divines. And shall we presumptuously scoff at those great and illustrious champions of the cross, whose blood moistened the vineyard of the Lord,—gave nourishment to the roots of the true vine, and thereby enabled it to put forth new branches to cover the earth, and shadow the waves of the ocean? Not to fraternize with SS. Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, Irenaus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Justin Martyr, Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, and that noble phalanx of christian heroes who fought a good fight, and, we doubt not, now swell the ranks of the church triumphant in heaven,

and with one voice sing hallelujahs to the Lamb that was slain and is alive again—not to fraternize with them is to commit spiritual suicide—to separate and schismatize from the church of the first-born. Shall the recorded opinions—the well authenticated historical facts in their writings contained, pass as idle tales?—and their scripture commentaries be despised, while modern expositions circulate among the many, and receive a reverence little inferior to that paid to the sacred volume? Truly hath it been affirmed by Cyprian, bishop and martyr, that he cannot have God for his father who has not the church for his mother. The everlasting word hath declared that the church is the spouse of Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Very God of very God. How, then, can a man possibly be his son if he is not born within the bosom of that church which is his spouse? and Christ is not the bridegroom of many churches, many spouses, but of one church, one spouse. Yet we see numerous and conflicting sects called by the name of churches,—all at variance—all in discord—all at strife, each one with its neighbours. If we trace the annals of the christian church for the first three hundred years of its existence, stained though its annals were with the blood of its best and choicest sons, till Constantine the emperor embraced the faith, and became the

nursing father of the heaven-descended child, we find in all that history that the church preserved its unity, its episcopacy unbroken: few and insignificant were the branches which fell from the holy mystic vine, and as they fell they rotted and decayed. Or if we continue our search for the twelve succeeding centuries, amid the blaze of spiritual light and truth, and amid the long night of darkness, horror, and corruption, still we find the same episcopacy, though clouded by error,—the same apostolic priesthood, though the apostolic faith groaned under the cumbrous load of the traditions of men. The light was not quenched, but a bushel covered and concealed it. The good seed was in the garden of the Lord; and the dew of the reformation quickened and matured it. But an enemy hath sown tares among the wheat. Then, if we peruse the records of the church from that period to the present, all is change and innovation. Rome seals her defection from the Catholic church at the council of Trent, by the introduction of a new creed, and new terms of communion; and about the same time Calvin, at Geneva, schismatizes from the church—makes laymen preachers and ministers of the sacraments.

Now, let us look at home—let us read the history of our native land. Scarcely have 150 years been numbered since the episcopal church was put down

as the establishment, and presbyterianism set up in its room. Has that establishment retained unbroken unity? No: it hath teemed with dissent—split hath succeeded to split—divisions have followed upon divisions. Roman and presbyterian dissenters are leagued to compass its destruction; but the episcopal church hath ever stood aloof from this unholy and unnatural alliance. She takes no unrighteous steps to regain the endowments of which she was dispossessed. What, then, is the result of our inquiry? It is this. The church for the first three centuries, notwithstanding all the persecutions which afflicted her,—notwithstanding all the tempests and the storms which rolled around her,—notwithstanding that she was unendowed, and a purely voluntary church, supported and maintained by the free-will offerings of the faithful, yet preserved her apostolic doctrine and priesthood, and finally triumphed, not by violence, but by the force of truth, over heathen error, and established herself, or to speak more correctly, was established by God. Then, in Scotland, what do we find has occurred within the last 150 years? Presbyterianism though by law established, and by law endowed; supported and defended by the state, yet in spite of all these legal and pecuniary props, is writhing under many a wound, and tottering on its very foundation. These are remarkable and

striking facts; and the contrast between a church persecuted and unendowed, which weathered the blast, and a protected and endowed establishment struggling with legions of kindred sects for existence, make us pause and think. The one, the brutal violence of man could not destroy; and the other, human power, though it wears a kingly crown, cannot hold together. In short, we see in episcopacy a strong inherent principle of unity; and in presbyterianism a strong bias to divisions. Therefore, as our blessed Lord and his holy apostles taught, both by precept and example, unity, and peace, and brotherly love, and condemned divisions and heresies as carnal, we conclude that episcopacy wears the deeper stamp of a divine original than does presbyterianism. It is a very remarkable fact, that in the United States of America there was planted an offset from the church of England, and one from the present Scotch establishment. The former has rapidly increased,—has continued a firmly compacted body,—has not split up into episcopal sects; while the latter is the same divisible system, and has given birth to many sects. How truly, there as elsewhere, are the words of St. Jerome, and his reasons for episcopacy verified—“That one chosen out of the presbyters should be set over the rest, unto whom the care of the church

should belong, that the seeds of schism might be taken away."

In these brief remarks on the foundation and structure of the church, I have endeavoured to prove (with what success, I leave the judicious and unprejudiced public to decide,) both from scripture, and from some of the early catholic fathers, that a government by bishops, undoubted successors of the apostles, and by presbyters and deacons, is the only legitimate constitution of the church, founded upon the apostles and prophets, of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone. I have carefully throughout avoided any expressions which might create irritation in the minds of people who are of a contrary opinion to myself, or who have not maturely considered the important subject. Important it most unquestionably is, for to the church were the promises of salvation made. That God hath so fixed and tied salvation down to what I may conceive to be the one true church, that none who are without its fold can possibly inherit the kingdom of heaven, it would be the most daring presumption to affirm, a most impious as well as futile attempt to coerce the all-abundant mercies of God. Nor would any christian who would follow the blessed Jesus in that beautiful feature of his character, humility, ever have the

audacity to judge upon whom the crown of never-ending glory shall eventually be bestowed. The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and he will judge the folk righteously, and the people with equity. Long, unwearied, and daily reflection on the subject, and some little reading, force upon me the unwavering conviction, that to the church at whose altars I minister, may be ascribed the marks of the one church, as exhibited in Acts ii. 41, 42. Holy baptism, steadfast continuance in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Apostolic doctrine we hold, for into the confession of faith, commonly called the apostles' creed, alone, are all our members baptized. A priesthood derived from the apostles we have, wherefore, we abide in their fellowship. The sacraments we have rightly and duly administered according to God's holy institution. And with a form of sound words, whose doctrines none can gainsay, so worship we the God of our fathers.

Though to such a conclusion have reflection and reading brought me, and greatly as I grieve that all in this country, at least, are not of the same church, yet never, I trust, shall I be induced to join in any unlawful plot—never, I trust, shall the devil so far gain the mastery over me, as to seduce me into the heinous sin of attempting, by violence

or by intrigue, the downfall of an establishment, to whose government I am decidedly opposed. St. Paul told the Romans, "whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." If it be the will of God to restore our church to its former condition, he will do it in the time and in the way he thinks the best. He is able now, as heretofore, by the mouth of his ministers, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. Our duty is with patience to tarry the Lord's leisure.

The church has now unfortunately been turned into the rallying point of factious men. There often have been, and perhaps will continue to be, religious, or rather polemical warfares; and though zeal for religion never can palliate violence, for when the zeal for religion is sterling, the fruits of it will be long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, patience; yet hath this zeal often been led in exculpation of violence. But now this mask of zeal is torn off, and trodden under foot,—this pretext is rent into shreds and patches, and flung to the winds—the sandals are cast away, and the cloven hoof is exposed to the gaze of all men. The very men who, on the score of conscience forsooth, could not associate with the establishment, whose pulpits rung with the errors and

abominations of popery, now are silent on the subject of doctrinal errors—like dumb dogs that cannot bark, they are mute as to Rome's corruptions and idolatry—that farce had a good run, paid well, and brought much gain to the craftsmen. But these Ephesians have got a new Diana. Their various idols are endowments, church-rates, bishops in the House of Lords, the slavery question, the corn laws. These, and many other human traditions, come more frequently out of the mouths of the pretended ministers of Christ, than the pure precepts of the gospel, for out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. But the last scene of all, which ends this strange eventful history—the winding up of the play, when all the dramatis personæ, the Jews, Turks, Infidels, Heretics, Jesuits, Friars Black and Gray, join hand in hand in one dance, and with united voices sing in one song, the burden of which is,—Civil and religious liberty, and down with the establishments.

The descendants of the Cromwellian liberals, and the crafty emissaries of the Vatican are worthy patrons of civil and religious liberty, and know what use to make of endowments when pulled down. In my Greek, Latin, and English editions of the scriptures, I nowhere find our Lord or his apostles forbidding men to pay tithe or tribute, or in their sermons and discourses, public or private, railing against the

revenues paid to the established church. On the contrary, I read of our Saviour saying, "Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone;" and likewise, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's:" and saith St. Paul, "Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." Cæsar we know was emperor of Rome, an heathen, and a conqueror of Judea, and part of the tribute paid to him went to support the national religion, which was idolatry, yet Christ, God and man, said render unto this wicked Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, viz., the tribute due to him. Moreover, our Saviour enjoined his disciples, "The scribes and pharisees sit on Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do: but," he adds, "do not ye after their works, for they say, and do not." These scriptures clearly define the path of duty in which we ought to walk; to the state, and to the establishment, we must render the tribute which the law of the land enjoins; and in matters spiritual we must render unto God the tribute due unto him: if in our consciences we

cannot approve of the state religion, we must quietly abstain from its ministrations, and, at the same time, we must remember that this does not prevent us from pointing out, and aiming at the correction of whatever errors may be taught by it, kindly, and with the design and desire of bringing the people into a right way of thinking. To this point have I directed these remarks; and I beseech the reader, who may find here some doctrines set forth, to him novel and startling, not to cast them away because they are so, but to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them. As God said to his peculiar people, so do I,—“Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” I have but one motive, the extension of the truth. I may err as to the truth; and if I am wrong, am ready to acknowledge my error. The matter is not that people have been born episcopalians or presbyterians, and, therefore, are determined so to continue. The inquiry ought to be, which is the one church of Christ,—which of all the various denominations of christians now extant can produce in favour of its genuineness the greatest mass of evidence? “The kingdom of heaven,” said our Lord, “is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had

and bought it." The church is a pearl of great price, for to it were committed the oracles of God. By baptism, which its ministers alone were commanded to administer, we are made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; and, by the body and blood of Christ, to the same ministers intrusted, are our souls refreshed and nourished; and except we eat of this body, and drink of this blood, we have no life in us, we are, spiritually speaking, dead. Seeing, then, that remission of sins by baptism, and life through the holy communion, are alone bestowed upon us by God's ministers, which all men practically confess by having recourse to them, and to them only, for these inestimable benefits, to the utter exclusion and rejection of lay administrators; it is doubtless of great pith and moment, seriously to inquire into, and accurately to investigate by what authority, by virtue of what commission men claim to act as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. What earthly king, or what nobleman would ever suffer every volunteer to manage his revenues, or to collect his rents?—to manage the economy of his household, or to make disbursements to his tradesmen? or what subjects, what tenantry would pay their taxes or their rent to any but properly warranted stewards? How infinitely more valuable are the treasures of

heaven?—how vastly more important is the husbandry of those everlasting riches which God alone can give? The Almighty who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, never surely can sanction, never can bless stewards who act without his authority; who say, “the Lord saith, and the Lord hath not sent them.” Suppose a number of men of different tempers and dispositions were each to say, such or such a nobleman’s estates were improperly managed, and went to that nobleman, and each should undertake to remedy the evil, and he, the nobleman, would not send, but only permit them to try their schemes, (resolving with himself that if his tenants took heed to, or paid their rents to any one but his lawful steward, and if these rents were not paid to his banker, he would exact the money at the hands of his tenants,) what would be the result? One would recommend one plan, and one another plan; a third would direct one method should be adopted, a fourth that it was bad, and unprofitable, and would ruin his farm. The poor tenants, unable to obey such contradictions, and judging, perhaps from his servants, that the old lord had lost his senses, would become careless of their business, and at length rise in rebellion against their kind old master. And is there not equal danger that amid the Babel of opinions of so many conflicting spiritual

stewards, the same may be the fatal results? The spiritual field, the soul, may receive into its bosom tares instead of wheat; for want of proper culture thorns and briers may grow up; and it may become an unweeded garden, things rank and gross in nature possessing it merely, till at length there remaineth no room for the good seed of the gospel, and men begin to say with the fool in his heart, "there is no God," and deny the Lord who bought them. This is no idle tear, for our Lord prayed thus, "Neither pray I for these (his disciples) alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." If union among the disciples of Jesus throughout all ages would produce belief in the divine character and mission of Christ, it must therefore follow that disunion or divisions must produce unbelief. We are told indeed, that the disunion between Episcopalians and Presbyterians is more apparent than real,—that in things essential they both agree, and that the differences are merely in non-essentials. Here is the rub, what are these non-essentials? Read and judge. In the preface to the ordination services, in the book of common prayer, it is said, "No man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful bishop, priest, or

deacon in the united church of England and Ireland, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, *or hath had formerly episcopal consecration or ordination.*" In the Westminster Confession of Faith, under the head—"Touching the power of ordination," it is set forth, "Ordination is the act of a presbytery. The power of ordering the whole work of ordination is in the whole presbytery." Then, in doctrinal matters, in article 31 of the church of England, "of the one oblation of Christ, finished upon the cross," it is said, "The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone." The Westminster Confession, on the contrary, teaches, chap. 3, sec. 6, "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." And again, in chap. 29, sec. 2, it calls Christ's one only sacrifice, "The alone propitiation for all the sins of the *elect*;" whereas St. Paul says, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6, "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom *for all*." And St. John says, 1 John, ii. 1, 2, "And if any

man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*." The Liturgy and articles of the church of England are received by the Scottish episcopal church, and the Westminster Confession of Faith is, I believe, for the most part, received by all presbyterian dissenters from the Scotch establishment; and the few extracts quoted from them prove the differences not to be non-essential. But there is one other point where the difference is most decidedly manifest, which, I think, few sober minded people will deem a non-essential, and will not deeply deplore its existence. I mean in the holy communion. It is deplorable, indeed, that so many sinners for whom Christ died, will not kneel at one common altar, and feed in unity and brotherly love on that spiritual and heavenly feast, wherein we commemorate the sacrifice of the Lamb without blemish and without spot, and the shedding of that precious blood which cleanseth from all sin—yes: to such an excess are the divisions of professing christians carried, that the very men who sit down at the same secular feast, who dine together in private, live in terms of friendship and conviviality, nevertheless are in separation at that table which ought to be the centre of unity, the magnet to draw to itself all the

kindly affections of our nature. What word is more delightful than communion? (with union, it means) it is of itself significant of harmony, and general concord among men, who are the children of one common parent; all disciples of one common Lord; all guilty of the same common frailties and infirmities; all standing in need of pardon and of strength, and of assistance from above. There needeth not, nor is it possible to have this communion, that all should come together into one place, to feed on the emblems of the Redeemer's body. But how complete and perfect would the communion be, were all the inhabitants of this our native land, with one consent, as St. Paul expresseth it, "with one mind, and with one mouth, to glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:" were we all, though in different edifices; on the same day, at the same hour, and with the same form of sound words, to prostrate ourselves before the same altar, in the presence of God and his holy angels, unanimously confessing our sins, praying for pardon, receiving absolution, and with singleness of heart, eating as it were, of one common loaf, and drinking of one common cup;—what a glorious picture of national unity for the heavenly host to witness!

What is the general custom when the inhabitants of a great city are desirous to obtain from government any general boon? Why, some chief men of

the city publicly assemble together—a petition is prepared, agreed to, and signed by the persons present. Verbatim copies of the petition are made, and left for signature in places much frequented, and thus all who are desirous of this common benefit, append their signatures to one common form of petition, and the unanimous prayer of the citizens is more likely to be granted by government, than if the same citizens sent many conflicting and opposite petitions on the same subject.

Though the object of this volume has been to prove from Scripture and history, that the government by Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, derived its origin from Christ and his apostles acting under the direction of the Holy Spirit, this, after all, is but the foundation, a foundation, however, which is planted upon a rock, and that rock is Christ. But, however strong and permanent be this foundation, it will profit us nothing unless we build upon it a goodly structure,—an holy temple for the Spirit to dwell in. A mere foundation is no house, there must be walls and a roof and furniture, without these we should be exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and our goods open to the spoiler; and if there be walls and no foundation, or a bad one, we know the consequence. The church having Jesus Christ for its head, is the way which leadeth unto eternal life, and bap-

tism is indeed the gate which openeth upon this way, but it will profit us nothing to have gone through this gate, unless we walk in the way. A man who repositeth all his confidence in this initiatory mystery, by which he was grafted into the church of Christ, is like unto one who sets out to go to a great man's house, he knocketh at the porter's gate, and is admitted ; but, instead of advancing forward to the house, he wandereth a while in the pleasure grounds, plucking, as he idly passeth along, the loveliest and the fairest flowers, till wearied with his ramble, and fascinated by the delights of the place, he lieth down to slumber, and perhaps awaketh no more. It was absolutely necessary for him to enter by the door, and having entered, it was requisite, if he wished to reach the termination of his journey in safety, to turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, but to keep in the direct road which the master of the house had made for the benefit of his visitors. So it is in the christian course. Baptism is not alone sufficient; whoever would arrive safely at his heavenly Father's house, must not wander from the road which he hath marked out for his children to walk in, or if in an evil hour he should stray, he must not suffer himself to be overcome of sleep, but must hasten to return. He must make use of all the helps which God hath given him, such as divine worship, the holy communion,

frequent reading of the Scriptures, and fervent prayer for the daily renewing and co-operation of the Holy Spirit, for without this sure abiding aid, all his efforts will be fruitless, all resolutions to overcome the evil one, and to extricate himself from his toils, totally unavailing, for, as our church truly teacheth her children to confess, "there is no health in us." The chief recommendation of the Reformed Episcopal church of Great Britain is, not solely its having certain church officers, called bishops, not a form of prayer, not its music and its vestments, but because it is the church of the living God,—the pillar and ground of the truth,—its clergy lawful, its whole liturgy venerable, for the most part, for its great antiquity, but still more venerable and worthy of all admiration; for, independently of the Lord's prayer repeated four times, there are, in the morning service alone, ten copious passages of the Old and New Testament read every Sunday, besides the Psalms in metre sung, and the prayers which are almost compiled verbatim from the Scriptures, and all of which are addressed to the throne of grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. This noble work, second only to the Holy Bible, is a mighty and majestic pillar of the truth, of which, by the blessing of Almighty God, it hath been the palladium; it hath preserved pure and uncorrupted in the church which useth it, the faith once delivered to the saints.

There may be, (but I trust none, or very few,) and have been, some Socinians among the clergy, but if they ever dared to preach their poisonous doctrines to their congregations,—yet the people always had, and I trust ever shall have, the best of all antidotes in the prayer book. It is the prayer book, with all reverence be it spoken, which hath preserved inviolate the great doctrine of the atonement, inasmuch as it hath concentrated within its pages, that, as well as all the other essential articles of the christian faith. While such hath resulted from the use of the liturgy of the Anglican, and its kindred churches,—Rome with its mass-book, in language not generally understood, and the Scriptures only partially divulged to the laity, and the Protestant sects, with the Bible in their hands, of which every individual minister is an interpreter, and without any standard form of prayer, have not all kept the faith whole and undefiled. Rome hath corrupted it, by adding to, rather than by abstracting from the faith; for she worships the trinity and believes in the atonement. Geneva hath corrupted it by abstraction,—she hath expunged from her creed belief in the divinity of Christ. The German presbyterians have fallen away. The Irish presbyterians are looked upon with a jealous eye by their kindred of the Scotch establishment; and of the 260 English presbyterian congregations, 230 are said

to be Unitarian; these all have the free, unlimited, and uncontrolled use of the Scriptures, without any let or hindrance; they may read them in English, in Latin, in Greek, or Hebrew, or they may abstain from reading exactly as they please. And if "the directory for the public worship of God," usually bound up with the Confession of Faith, hath any weight, ministers who subscribe that book are bound publicly to read the Scriptures. Under the head of "public reading of the Holy Scriptures," I find this injunction, "all the Canonical books of the Old and New Testament, (but none of those which are commonly called Apocrypha), shall be publicly read in the vulgar tongue, out of the best allowed translation, distinctly that all may hear and understand. How large a portion shall be read at once is left to the wisdom of the minister; but it is convenient that ordinarily one chapter of each Testament be read at every meeting, and sometimes more, where the chapters be short, or the coherence of matter requireth it. It is requisite that all the canonical books be read over, in order that the people may be better acquainted with the whole body of the Scriptures; and ordinarily where the reading in either Testament endeth on one Lord's day, it is to be begun the next." The excellence of this command, for it begins "shall be publicly read," is indisputable, but the practice, it may be

asserted without the fear of contradiction, is not only not universally, but seldom, to read the Scriptures at all in presbyterian places of worship; so that with all the taunts thrown out against our church, that it is popish, and all the vauntings about the scriptural character of presbyterianism, we are forced to confess that even in the services of the Roman church, bad and corrupted as it is, the Word of God is more frequently and universally read, than in presbyterian places of worship, and that they, the presbyterians, actually do prefer the traditions of men to the pure and unadulterated Word of God. While our church stands proudly forward as the greatest and most scriptural church in all christendom, she dares challenge any denomination of christians in all the world to prove that their public worship is more scriptural than that of the Churches of England and Ireland, and those others which use her liturgy. The people of these churches have read to them, besides the sermons, the Word of God, unmixed, unadulterated, unalloyed by human comment. Their ministers deliver to them the Oracles of God, pure and uncorrupted as when the Holy Spirit dictated them to the inspired writers of the sacred volume. They are unchanged by the lapse of time, undeteriorated by the operation of printing, and when the minister readeth the scriptures to the peo-

ple, they ought to feel as if they stood in the immediate presence of God, whose Holy Spirit was speaking to them by the mouth of his ministers, for whosoever readeth the Scriptures readeth the Words of the Spirit. Now as it is undoubted that the scriptures are the same as when first taught from God, it is perfectly certain that wherever these scriptures are cast aside to make room for a sermon or any other human composition, that that sermon, however doctrinal it may be, yet is a composition of a fallible man, therefore, in plainness of speech, God is rejected and man preferred ; this is most assuredly the case whenever the preacher omits to read the Holy Scriptures, in order that he may have the longer time to expend upon the delivery of his sermon, which being a human, uninspired composition, every sane person must admit is a tradition of man. Now if all tradition is to be rejected, simply on the ground of its being tradition, it matters not whether the tradition be of this year's date, or of a thousand, or fifteen, or eighteen hundred years back, so it be tradition, and not the Word of God unmixed ; therefore, in common justice, if we reject the written tradition of Ignatius, Tertullian, &c., we must also reject the written tradition of Calvin, Luther, and all modern divines, and adhere closely to the scriptures without note or comment. Herein is the wisdom of our

church so prominently distinguished, while she permits to her people tradition, *i. e.* sermons, she at the same time takes care that these traditions shall not usurp the place of scripture ; but she commands that her ministers, shall upon all occasions of public worship, read certain portions of scripture, and in these commands she will be and is obeyed—no minister daring to depart from that strict rule which she hath so wisely ordered. This is the glory of our church, she hath persevered in the reading of the Word of God, and God hath preserved her, and the defections of the Protestant sects have been in a great measure caused by the turning God's Word out of His house, and the introduction of lengthy discourses in its stead. It is pretended that now the people read the scriptures so much at home, therefore it is unnecessary to read them in church. I without hesitation deny that the scriptures are read much at home by any class of people. If they are more read now than formerly, how does it happen that crime has so enormously increased, especially in Scotland, which boasts its superior moral instruction. But even did every householder read the scriptures daily to his family, this could not excuse the sin of the omission on Sundays, and were the people so fond of the scriptures as to read them daily, they would have no greater delight than to hear them read in church, and the

very neglect of their favourite book, the Bible, would call forth some expression of dissatisfaction, more particularly in these times when people are not apt to be passive under the pressure of public grievances, and nothing could surely be a greater grievance to a godly people than the shutting up from them in their public devotions, a book which they take such great pleasure in reading in their domestic devotions. But the people care for none of these things, they do not wish to hear the scriptures read in church. They would rather have a sermon than the scriptures. I do not mean from this that the preaching of sermons is wrong and ought to be discontinued; far from it, all I would have is, that the Bible, being the Word of God without blemish, or taint of corruption and imperfection, ought to have the first place, not only in universal estimation, but in universal reading also, and that the fittest time for its being read is when the people are gathered together for the express purpose of Divine worship.

I have endeavoured to prove from scripture, from the evidence of antiquity, from the practical working of the system, that the Episcopal is the true form of church government. The Episcopal church of this empire hath been, by the blessing of God, the great bulwark of the faith; like a fruitful vine in the midst of a forest, it hath put forth its branches to every

quarter of the globe, and at home she boldly confronts Romish errors on the one side and sectarianism on the other; and we may search the wide world over and nowhere shall we find a body of clergy so distinguished for theological knowledge. With whose writings are the shelves of the divinity student filled? With those of English divines. Much calumniated though her clergy be, none are so distinguished for their piety, none so devoted to the discharge of their high and holy functions. Scotland may boast of her parish schools and parish schoolmasters, but England boasts of her schools under the immediate direction of her clergy. The church of England, mindful of the divine command to St. Peter, "Feed my lambs as well as my sheep," requireth of her clergy that they "be diligent in catechising the young of the fold," and of this they are not neglectful; everywhere there are Sunday Schools personally superintended by the clergy, and the children who belong to them are all brought in a body to the church. Thus, by giving milk to the babes in Christ and strong meat (that is, sermons) to the adults, they rightly and truly "Take heed to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." In no whit are the Scottish Episcopal clergy behind their Anglican brethren in this respect; by

them the catechetical system is carried to the highest perfection, and there is great reason to hope that the good seed of the word, thus so abundantly sown, will find in many a juvenile breast a fertile soil, where, by the refreshing influence of the Holy Spirit it will bring forth fruit unto perfection. The ministers of religion can only plant and sow, it is God and God alone who giveth the increase. A time doubtless, there was when the Episcopal clergy did not put their hands so steadily to the plough as they ought, but those days of laxity if they have not already, are now rapidly departing. A brighter sun hath dawned on the Israel of God, and the husbandmen no longer are asleep. They have girded themselves manfully for the work, and though rank be the weeds that encumber the ground, success must inevitably follow, for the work is the work of the Lord, and who hath resisted—who can resist his power?

Again I entreat my readers calmly to consider, not only the arguments here advanced in favour of the apostolic succession, but also to search into other authorities on the subject. The matter is not one of controversy, not to be made an occasion of reviling and wrath; but of a grave and serious inquiry after truth, that we may ascertain whether we be in the faith, whether we really and truly be members of the mystic body, the church of which the Lord of life is

the head; and whether, if we be not members of that body, we can have received that gift of the Holy Spirit without which we can do no good thing pleasing and acceptable to God. And let me beseech those of my readers whom baptism hath made members of our holy branch of the catholic church, to abide steadfastly within the bosom of that church, humbly waiting upon her holy ordinances; not doubting, but earnestly believing that they, by the divine blessing, are able to procure for them admission into Christ's everlasting kingdom. This is the more necessary in this latitudinarian age, when people seem to think they may halt between many opinions, without the risk of being blown about by every wind of doctrine: what assurance they have of this I am at a loss to discover. Certain it is, a degree of licentiousness, which men call liberality, is tolerated in religion; nay, more, is highly applauded, which, were it practised in political life, would subject the offender to the scorn and contempt of all lovers of consistency. Were a peer, or a member of the Commons to vote one day with ministers, and another day with the opposition, and, too, upon party questions; or were an elector to split his vote between a tory and a radical candidate, why, both the peer, the elected, and the elector, would be most heartily despised by all parties, and trusted by none, and general opinion would point

at either of them as a man in whom there was no principle. Not so in religion. The peer, the member of Parliament, the elector, may express his approbation of all sorts of religious creeds however opposite. In England, he may be an Episcopalian, in Scotland, a Presbyterian, and in Italy, a Romanist, yet all the while pass for a person of sound religious principles, and may actually look upon his inconsistency with the utmost complacency and self-applause, quieting his conscience if it be troublesome, with this, to him, plausible argument, that it is right to show respect to the established church of the country, thus bowing the knee to the Erastian creed, that it is the state which maketh the church of God. There are others, too, whose religious principles are still more elastic, and are possessed of such liberal and enlightened minds, as to frequent all sorts of places of worship in the same country, Episcopalian or Presbyterian, Trinitarian or Unitarian. To such persons the Lord God omnipotent speaketh through the mouth of the prophet Elijah: "How long halt ye between two opinions, if the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal, then follow him." And, saith our blessed Lord, "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." True it is no one worships the idol Baal, but it is also true

that if men would be good christians, they would flee divisions,—they would hold either to episcopacy or presbyterianism; they would not, in the morning, in our church pray to be delivered from schism, and straitway, in the afternoon, commit schism by frequenting places of worship with which their church, as a church, holds no communion—but this is what the world calls bigotry;—yet the very same halting between toryism and radicalism is called inconsistency, and want of principle. Nevertheless, whatever the protestant world may say of it, schism is a sin most frequently condemned in scripture; and in the Old Testament, the most tremendous punishments have been inflicted upon schismatics. In the New Testament our blessed Lord frequently and fervently prayed for unity among his chosen apostles; and the believers in all ages, and the apostles who knew their Lord's will, condemned schism in the most decided and unequivocal terms. St. Paul says, “Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple.” The Corinthians he condemns as carnal, because there were divisions among them, inasmuch as some followed after Paul, and some after Appollos, so as

we find some now called Brownists, some Wesleyans, some Calvinists, some Lutherans. Notwithstanding all these denunciations against schism; (and the Epistle of St. Jude is entirely composed of them,) the great majority of protestants either shut their eyes against them, or attempt by various subterfuges to explain them away. Yet with what wonderful acuteness of vision—with what microscopic eyes do they discover all the glosses of the Romanists, and their perversions of Scripture. But are there any perversions of Scripture greater than transforming schism into religious liberty? This savours somewhat of Jesuitism. There are many humble imitators of Rome, and adopters of its system, even among those who pretend to be most hostile to its corruptions. It is the mark of a true servant of the Lord Jesus to denounce error wherever it may appear, whether among Protestants or Romanists. The Roman, doubtless, is the most prominent of all schisms. The creed of Pius the IV., fixes upon him and all his adherents and subscribers to it, the stigma of schism; and one and all they lie under the anathemas of the councils of Nice, of the fourth, and Ephesus and Chalcedon of the fifth centuries, for adding to the faith. Rome, likewise, is condemned by the then and other councils of the catholic church, or having intruded bishops and other clerics into

Great Britain, in opposition to the lawful bishops; and for setting up altar against altar. Were the protestant sects to reverence and read the fathers a little more, they might be better furnished than they are with arguments against Rome and its corruptions; for Rome stands more upon catholic than scriptural grounds, but, doubtless, they are afraid of antiquity, for it witnesseth against them also.

Surrounded as we now are by such multitudes of sects, which it is called bigoted and illiberal to speak against; it requires some degree of moral courage to adhere steadfastly to that which a man conscientiously believes to be the true church. The ties of friendship and blood which bind us in this divided country to so many various sects, are also formidable barriers to our clinging with our whole hearts to what we conceive to be the orthodox faith. Worldly interests likewise start up and bid us beware of marking those who create divisions, lest we suffer in our temporal estates. These are indeed powerful temptations, and too generally yielded to. One whom a conviction of its enormity forces to stand aloof from schismatics, is shunned, avoided, and reviled: all men speak evil of him; it requires some fortitude to endure these persecutions. But who that esteems the favour of God before the good opinion even of his dearest friends and nearest kindred, would ever in

such a case hesitate how to act? Were one universal cloud of error to spread thick darkness over the church of this empire—were all, save one individual, to profess a false religion, not from conviction, but through fear; how noble would be the conduct of him who thus boldly stood forward as a witness to the truth—who alone, and unsupported, refused to follow the multitude to do evil; choosing, with Moses, rather to suffer affliction than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: and how certain would he who had worn the thorny crown here be of winning the crown of immortal glory hereafter!

Let the christian, then, in this age of, I will not call it religious liberality, but of licentiousness, arm himself against the errors of the times—let him openly, and without fear, bear in his hand the Redeemer's cross, not craven-like cast it away—let him with patient resignation endure every name of obloquy save that of APOSTATE. Now that schism has raised its deformed head so high, and whether tricked out in the gaudy frippery of Romish tinsel,—its gilded mitres, and embroidered vestments, and all the pomp and circumstance which decoy the simple;—or whether in the persons of the poor street preacher, whatever guise it wears, it still is the same hideous excrescence on the vine—the same blot on the christian faith; but our eyes are so familiar with the

sight, that we forget its monstrosities—and our perceptions of the truth are become so dull, that we cannot discern the danger we incur by violating the church's unity. Even Rome herself, though her garments are crimsoned o'er with guilt—though her hands are red with the blood of the saints—though her forehead is branded with the stamp of schism, yet hath preserved unity to such an extent as to warrant her pointing with derision to the miserable wreck of a church which disgraces our country—and with all their faults, the Romanists have a zeal for their sect which protestants would do well to imitate: the sin of Laodicea lieth not at their door: they spare neither labour nor money, and rest not day or night in their efforts to make proselytes. While we who pride ourselves on the purity of our faith—on the scriptural character of our services—and on the catholicity of our church, shrink as it were from an open avowal of our principles, and are disposed rather to deny than to support the holy venerable mother whose children we profess to be.

It is greatly to be feared that the latitudinarian spirit, almost universally prevalent, proceeds more from an absence of sound religious principles, than from a genuine spirit of toleration and pure liberality. To persecute any one on account of religion is utterly repugnant to the word of God, and revolting to every

really liberal and enlightened mind. But to vacillate between opposite classes of christians—to give an equal share of support to professors of creeds diametrically at variance with each other, to be so regardless of the church to which they belong as actually to be in total ignorance of the doctrines which it teaches, and to crown all, without one ray of light on the subject positively to affirm that there is no difference between conflicting communities of believers, is so monstrously absurd as to lead us to question the sanity of men of this generation. What tyro in politics knows not all the essential articles in the creeds of Tories, Whigs, and Radicals? Most people, without aiming at cutting any very notable figure in society, but simply desiring not to be distinguished for extreme ignorance, take some little pains to acquaint themselves with that very important species of information; yet what multitudes of people there are, well educated, of rank and influence in society, decent, orderly, well living, church frequenting people, who are equally ignorant of the articles and liturgy of the church of England or of Scotland, of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and of Romanism, as of the koran; and doubtless these enlightened people, if the subject be broached in their presence, will stoutly maintain that there is no difference among them. Such ignorance of any ordinary

branch of profane knowledge would be very discreditable in persons pretending to be generally well-informed, and it is sinful to be ignorant of that highest of all knowledge—knowledge of God's most holy religion, and of the surest and the safest roads which lead unto everlasting life. True it is, that “where a man's treasure is, there his heart is also.” If this treasure be of the earth, earthy; if all his anxiety and care be to guard or to augment the wealth which God hath given him, (though frequently it is thought, by my own arm have I gotten my riches) probably he will learn and adopt the best method to effect his purpose, and if this treasure be in heaven, his heart will be set on the wisest and the surest way to reach unto it: no labour will be too great, no investigation more patient, and no time will be thought too much to bestow on that most interesting, most vital inquiry.

Can there be a doubt on this all-important subject, as to the real constitution of the church of Christ, (and this constitution affects the very existence of the church) and that doubt suffered to remain unsolved? Our blessed Lord distinctly declared to his apostles, “Abide in me and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in

him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." What is easier to be understood than this? Every body knows that a tree is composed of a root, trunk, and branches, and that all these are nourished by sap or juice flowing from the roots. Jesus calls himself a tree, a vine, the true vine, of which God the Father is the husbandman, and the apostles are the branches, or the limbs growing out of the trunk. The limbs of a natural vine or any other tree, we also know, have attached to them smaller branches or twigs, all of which are covered with buds, and if one of these branches be broken, (though still adhering to the parent stem) from the lack of a full supply of sap, the fruit will be small in size and quantity, and of inferior flavour; but if the branch be entirely severed from the parent stem, if it falls upon the ground it must die, and rot, and with it every incipient bud; all, all must perish. This parable, then, teaches us how necessary it is to remain in the vine, in Christ, and his apostles in the church; and as the natural vine can produce grapes only, and no other sort of fruit, so the spiritual vine can only have one church proceeding from, or growing out of it. We see not grapes, apples, figs, pomegranates, walnuts, mulberries growing from the vine, but grapes only; therefore from the spiritual vine we cannot possibly expect to see growing Episcopal and

Presbyterian branches, Burghers and Antiburghers, Jumpers and Quakers, and all those various and conflicting sects, which in modern language are called churches. Surely God hath sent among us a strong delusion that we should believe a lie. While this disunion continues—while the body spiritual is rent limb from limb, and one member saith to the other, I have no need of thee, we may lift our voice against the corruptions of Rome, we may call her an unscriptural church, yet we cannot escape the condemnation of St. Paul, of being carnal so long as there are divisions among us; and how can we ever make head against the Roman bishop? How can the reft and shattered Protestant sects ever withstand a system which, so far as its police is concerned, is most perfect—whose members, whether clerical or lay, of whatever degree, all act in concert, are all zealous in the support of their religion, which they believe to be true? We forget what St. James saith, “that whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” What then shall it profit any people to renounce Roman doctrines and errors, while they run into others equally contrary to scripture and hateful to God; and surely few will have the hardihood to affirm that schism accords with the letter or with the spirit of divine revelation; but it is far easier and more congenial to our corrup-

ted nature to see the mote in our brother's eye, than to perceive the beam in our own eye—with the self-righteous pharisee to thank God that we are not as other men; than to say with the humble and contrite publican, God be merciful to me a sinner. This shameful lukewarmness on the part of many who profess a belief that theirs is a pure and apostolic branch of the church of Christ, is that very sin with which the church of Laodicea was charged; and these dreadful schisms in the body spiritual will form heavy items in the accusing angel's indictment when the day of retribution comes. What heart can feel, what tongue can express, or pen inscribe, the magnitude of the blessing conferred upon this empire by the Reformation? Yet how are these blessings set at nought and trampled under foot. In our eagerness to avoid the Charybdis of Roman error, we have split upon the Scylla of sectarianism, both of which are equally dangerous to the vessel of our souls. The religious condition of our country is fearful and appalling in the extreme. Rome, without departing in one iota from her faith, and with respect to what she calls heretics, "nursing her wrath to keep it warm," that whenever she has the power, she may crush them altogether,—is rapidly extending her principles and her dominion, while Protestants, as in piping times

of peace, instead of joining their forces in one united and compact array, are at war among themselves, contending not about doctrinal corruptions, but striving about matters totally disconnected with religion, the payment of the clergy, as if the very essence of Christianity centered in a few chalders of corn. Were religion and the salvation of souls the things most cared for, would not they who minister in holy things evince a disposition to compose their differences, to search for what really is the truth? and then, when this has been calmly and dispassionately investigated and established, how well would they be able to resist the inroads of Romanism, and suppress that pernicious superstition which, whether religiously or politically considered, is the very bane of Christendom. But we are yet far removed from the golden age. Ours is the iron age of strife, agitation, and discord. Practised in all the arts of intrigue, the crafty Jesuit adapts his weapons to the enemy he has to encounter, and religious liberty, an arrow borrowed from the quiver of his antagonist, if not formed in the arsenal of the vatican, is the watchword of the inventors and patrons of the Holy Inquisition. Cozened by the Protean form, the deluded dissenter follows in his train, hoping that when the knife is plunged in the bosom of

the Established Church, he himself may share the spoil. Oh! slow of heart to believe the devices of your wily associates! as a fly in the meshes of a spider's web, so will ye dissenters be in the clutches of an insatiate Romanist. Can ye cope with him in art? Can your disjointed forces stand before the well disciplined and combined army of the Roman Pontiff? You have no one rallying point, no centre of union; a handful of disjointed members opposed to a powerful and well organized band; a skeleton without springs to a living body in the prime and vigour of life. Can the Unitarian march under the same banner with Trinitarian dissenters? Can they sleep in the same camp, under the same tent? Who will attempt to marshall such a disorderly host? You may flatter yourselves, that if you can, with the aid of Romanists and Infidels, only master the established church of England and Scotland, and we will not say obtain, but merely obtain a sight of the prize for which you have been contending, you may flatter yourselves with the hope of dividing the plunder. Be not deceived. If the Romanists consider the Established Clergy as interlopers in the benefices, which, they say, belong to them, in what estimation will they hold you? You whose ministers they call laymen, and, worse

than that, heretic laymen,—as chaff to be blown by the wind, as tares to be burned at the stake, as stubborn unbelievers to be racked in the dungeons of the Inquisition, as utterly reprobate and aliens from God, meet victims for eternal fires! *Quid te dementia cepit!* what folly, what blind delusion hath overpowered the better reason of the country? It frequently happens that insane persons are rational enough on all subjects save one. Strike that jarring chord, and all the harmony of the instrument is destroyed. So it is with the enemies of the church. Rather than support it, they will join hand in hand with Romanists. How unholy, how unnatural the alliance! The genius of Popery is unchanged. Still the Roman church locks up the Bible with jealous fear from the eyes of the laity. She will, indeed, permit them to read her version, but then the price of it renders it unattainable by the poor. Why, then, will ye join with such a church? Do you, dissenters, hold, that the end justifies the means? This is a Popish doctrine, but not generally considered a Protestant one. If you strive, you must strive lawfully. Among dissenters, I am well satisfied that many hate and abhor the alliance with Rome, and the factious proceedings of men, whose conduct shows

small agreement with the religion of Jesus. Many of these are emerging from those troubled waters and seeking tranquility in the bosom of the Episcopal church, more especially as now few persons of discernment or common sense charge its liturgy with popish errors. Though upon a late occasion, one person of talent, from ignorance doubtless of what he was talking about, (for, from the gross mistatement of fact, it is charitably to be hoped he never had seen the book,) actually expended many words to convince his auditors of numerous rubrics for bowing and making signs of the cross, contained in the Book of Common Prayer, set forth by Archbishop Laud for the use of the Church in Scotland; all which rubrics have no existence save in the imagination of the speaker. Respect for the character of that otherwise well-informed minister of the Establishment, prevents me from saying more on the subject; and I hope, should these pages ever meet his eye, he will examine the book, and, having discovered his mistake, take some early public opportunity of acknowledging that he had been misinformed. In short, the Scottish liturgy differs in only a few particulars from the Anglican Service Book now in use, and in neither are there to be found any doctrines or practices of Roman invention. In-

deed, so entirely is the Book of Common Prayer made up of Scripture expressions, that were these extracted, very little would remain. It is a worthy helpmate to the Bible; and the more it is read and understood, the more highly will it be prized. Whoever makes the Book of Common Prayer his companion, will soon acquire a proper frame of mind to search for the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic church. He will enter upon the inquiry with humility. He will submit his understanding to the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit; like the Ethiopian Treasurer to Queen Candace, he will search diligently the Scriptures and early writers, not trusting to his own discernment, but to the prompting of the same Spirit with which Philip the deacon was filled, when he expounded to him the gospel of Jesus. If it be (and few seriously-disposed persons will deny that it is) of any importance to be members of the true church, whichever that may be, He who beheld well pleased, the Ethiopian ruler inquiring after the truth, will see with equal delight all, as many as follow his example, and as He promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask, He will not withhold His illumination from those who, with singleness of heart, are engaged in this most sacred employment. Were this submission to the Divine will more universal; were persons of various creeds to make this subject,

as well as the study of the doctrinal part of the scriptures, more frequently matter of prayer, fervent secret prayer of the closet; were they, with the gentleness and confiding docility of little children, to cast themselves entirely upon the omnipotent direction of their Father in heaven, He would not be slow to send unto them the Comforter to guide them unto all truth. Then enmity, strife, and divisions would cease, and with one mind and one mouth they would glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we are too apt to make religion and articles of belief matter of angry disputations and vain jangling, resting our confidence on our fallible judgment and natural acumen, being more determined to find arguments to maintain our opinions than yield in debate when we find our positions overthrown—and even though vanquished we will argue still. The consequence generally is, that both parties separate, more and more rooted and established in their former prejudices and convictions, either pluming himself on the force of his own reasoning and on the victory he has gained over his adversary. The contest is carried on between man and man; God hath taken no part in it, because He hath not been supplicated to do so, wherefore so many various conclusions on the same passages of scripture. How forcible are St. Paul's remarks on this head in his noble epistle to the

Corinthians, "For what man," says he, "knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 11—14." It was by the help of the Holy Ghost that St. Paul taught and planted churches, and as the Divine promise was, that the Comforter should abide with the church for ever, it is quite certain that if by prayer we consult the Spirit, he will teach us to discern the true church and the orthodox faith. Had the church in all ages, and in all places, always been guided by these principles, it never could have erred as it did. It fell into deadly error, not because the Divine Head was unable or unwilling to keep it pure in faith and steadfast unto the end, but because the Holy Spirit was not invoked to guide it unto all truth. In many of the later councils, that of Trent especially, the expression, "being met in the Holy Ghost" was

impiously employed, when, it is a notorious fact, that the business of those assemblies was entirely managed by intrigue, and by the conduct of creatures of the Roman bishop; and had the laity, too, both in former and in these latter times, been led by the same principles, we should not now have to deplore the many schisms which have rent the body of Christ, *i. e.* the church. Doubtless the carnal spirit manifested by the bishops and clergy, anterior to, and at the council of Trent, paved the way for the declensions on the part of the laity, and this together with the too successful machinations of the Jesuits in the reign of Charles I. have given birth to the numerous sectaries which swarm in Protestant Britain. In short, whether in Protestant countries or in Romish, an enormous mass of corruption prevails. The Roman church by curbing too tightly, I may say by suppressing private judgment, has sunk its people into the grossest superstitions, has produced the most dreadful immoralities, and even uncivilized nations; and Protestant churches by over relaxing the rein, have given a bonus to dissent, and suffered the people to run into schism of every description. In both cases the evils are to be ascribed to one and the same cause, the exaltation of the wisdom of man above the wisdom of God, in Protestant countries by the people, and in Romish by the clergy—the neglect of the teaching of the

Spirit in things spiritual. In England the church has been disarmed by the state, the sovereign has wrested the pastoral staff from the hands of the bishops, and the Houses of Parliament legislate in ecclesiastical affairs. In Ireland the state has most shamefully trampled upon the church, and has even dared to cut off ten bishops. In those two countries where the bishops have been deprived of their apostolic authority over their flocks, the people have learned to despise their sacred office, have set up their private interpretation of scripture, formed new articles of faith in opposition to what their spiritual superiors, lawfully assembled, have decreed, and these, too, men of such godly lives, as it may fairly be said of them, that they sought and received help from above. Now as God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as He willeth that men should dwell together in unity and brotherly love, it is clear that schism never could have been suggested by the Holy Spirit, and therefore, that schismatics and separatists never could in earnest have supplicated His inward spiritual teaching; and this is put beyond the possibility of doubt, by the fact that in the same country, England for example, individuals have, from time to time started up as the originators of sects, and have drawn away disciples after them. Had those heresiarchs, having the fear of God before their eyes,

been desirous to promote the advancement of the kingdom of Christ here on earth, they would have met together, and after the most solemn prayer, have proceeded to examine the articles and liturgy of the established church, together with the authority of the lawful clergy; and if after this they had discovered that all were contrary to the Word of God and the holy catholic church, then and not till then, might it have been allowed that they were guided in their separation by the wisdom and motions of the Holy Ghost. So far were they from acting in this manner, that each inventor of novelty, without any regard had to the opinions of his brother separatist, was careful only to maintain that he himself was in the right, that his was the only standard of orthodoxy, and that all others were in the wrong; and in process of time, of the people, some adhered to his way of thinking, others to the opinions of another man, and thus sectarianism arose and was propagated; but all could not have relied upon the sure direction of the Holy Ghost, but upon their fallible discernment, because, as was said above, God is not the author of confusion.

Then again, let us consider the two great bodies which divided the kingdom in the days of Charles and Cromwell, the Presbyterians and Independents. They pretended to much godliness, to great wrestlings

with the Spirit, which with all propriety they termed exercising in prayer, for from the length of time they spake, and the vehement gesticulations they used, they truly took great exercise and fatigue. Well, what were the fruits of all those pretensions to godliness? The fruit of the Spirit, St. Paul told the Galatians, is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, but as these graces did not abound in them, but on the contrary each of those two great sects displayed towards the other hatred, variance, wrath, strife, murder, which the same apostle, in the same chapter above quoted, calls works of the flesh; it is manifest that both of them were not led by the Spirit, nor had besought the Spirit to guide them into all truth. And in Scotland, the parties who overthrew the established church in 1638, one would hardly be inclined to allow were under the influence of the Holy Spirit. That great revolution of the church was effected by an association of nobles, with their retainers, by whose intrigues, intimidation, and force of arms, a packed assembly was formed, the bishops were impeached with the commission of the grossest crimes, and condemned unheard and untried. Again, the proceedings which marked the demolition of the established church after the events of 1688 were of the same unholy and lawless character. Without entering at all

into the merits or demerits of the Episcopal church or its clergy, the measures adopted for setting up Presbyterianism on its ruins cannot stand the test of scripture, neither are they in keeping with the example and precepts of the Redeemer and his apostles. Nowhere do we read of them using violence to overthrow the church of the Jews. They made no assault upon the temple, its clergy, and services; they did not go about rending the vestments of the priests, pulling down altars, and profanely desecrating the places of the Most High God. The testimony of miracles proved their mission, and the persuasive oratory of the Spirit converted the Jews from a carnal to a spiritual worship, and the Gentiles from the worship of the creature to the creator; the rays of Divine truth illuminated a benighted world, and every where lighted mankind into the household of faith. Was it thus the Presbyterian party acted in Scotland? Did they meekly and quietly endeavour the establishment of what they called a more scriptural form of church government and a purer faith? Did they meet in solemn assemblies, and by prayer, and grave and learned discussion, humbly submitting their wills to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, strive to settle the regimen and doctrines of the national church? History answers, No. The people rabbled the clergy out of their homes, assaulted

and maltreated their persons, tore their vestments and destroyed their service books, and the sanction of the government was bestowed upon their deeds of violence and plunder. The transactions of those unhappy times cannot be justified; neither can the perpetrators of them be said to have been guided by the Spirit of God. However the ejected clergy and the laity of their church may have felt under such persecutions, we cannot pretend to determine; but in their conduct they bore with patient resignation and endurance the downfall of their church, and the ruin of their property. They offered no resistance, did not have recourse to arms; they attempted not by war and tumult to reinstate themselves in the exercise of their sacred functions, and to regain possession of the property of which they had unjustly been deprived. The oppressor smote them on the right cheek, and they turned to him the other also. Worthy of all condemnation as were the means resorted to in setting up the ecclesiastical polity now dominant in Scotland; they are equally reprehensible when applied to the establishing of the most apostolical of all churches. Be the creed the purest, be the government the most correspondent with that of the primitive church, no violence, no sanguinary measures ever can be palliated; christianity commands us to fly before persecution, and to bear it unresistingly when

it overtakes us. Such was the spirit which was in the episcopal party, in afflictions as great and severe as ever happened to any branch of the church of Christ from the time of its first propagation. Personally indeed, christians of the earliest ages suffered greater persecution, but as a church no one endured more systematic oppression. Yet notwithstanding these severities, the light of the episcopal church was not quenched; and after a long period of darkness it arose with renovated splendour, and now shines, amid many difficulties, in cities as well as in the most sequestered quarters of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Surely the blessing of God has rested upon the faithful witnesses who endured such great tribulation for His sake and for the gospel's, and to this may in all probability be ascribed the unbroken unity which the episcopal church in Scotland has preserved, while that ecclesiastical system established in its room has been rent into numberless divisions.

Christian reader, whoever thou art, pause and reflect on this dreadful dismemberment of the spiritual body by law established. Whether shattered by the lightnings of heaven, scathed by the inventions of man, or torn by the wiles of the devil; to whatever cause may be attributed the ruin of that tree which towered proudly o'er the land of its birth, it ministers to a contemplative

mind food for serious digestion. Thou art still on the stream of life hastening to that ocean which intervenes between your earthly pilgrimage and the land of promise, the rest for the people of God. Take heed to the vessel in which thou hast embarked. While yet on the outset of that perilous voyage a choice of conveyance remains, select that which best can endure the storms of a tempestuous ocean. When the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was poured upon the earth, no vessel could weather the storm, save that which Noah had built, and the everlasting God had designed. The ark, the symbol of unity, bore safely on the wide waste of waters the church of the Lord of Hosts, while ships of human architecture were sunk in the trough of the sea. God in all things directed the building of the ark: it was made of wood which grew upon the earth, it was peopled with those whom God, by his servant Noah, called into it. They were sustained by the food which He had appointed. He piloted it through the deluge, and, in due time, He landed it on the mountain he had chosen. By faith Noah and his family hearkened to the command of God; by faith they entered into the ark; and by their obedience,

which manifested their faith, they were saved. Search, then, diligently, not trusting to your own wisdom, but to that which the Holy Ghost teacheth, for that church which God hath designed and His delegated ministers have builded. Accurately examine its whole frame and structure; by faith enter into it, by faith partake of the heavenly food which its Divine Author and Finisher hath ordained for the sustenance of the soul, and He who guided the ark of Noah will safely conduct the vessel in which thou hast embarked to the haven of everlasting repose. Could the numerous sects of Protestants only be persuaded to lay aside their animosities, and, by prayer and study, inquire after the truth, they would then better be enabled to convey to distant countries the knowledge of the gospel of peace. That there has been a pause in the propagation of the gospel among the heathen cannot be questioned. I know not to what this melancholy state of affairs is to be ascribed but to the manifold divisions among Christians; and easily can I picture to myself the wonder of the heathen when called upon by the missionaries of hostile sects to embrace the gospel. Like rival merchants in the market place exposing their varied wares for sale, each one magnifying the beauty of his own fabric, and, in an

equal ratio, decrying that of his opponents. The Romanist offering to the worshipper of Jugger-naut the image of the blessed Virgin, of the crucified Saviour, or of any favourite saint,—the catholic and Protestant denouncing the adoration of either to be equally offensive to Him who hath said, “thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image to worship it,”—the catholic Episcopalian offering the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, and teaching the doctrine of universal redemption, enjoining, as necessary to the legitimate constitution of the church, the three orders of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, of apostolic descent,—while the Protestant sects, widely differing from all, holding out the Bible alone, and unconnected with any formulary of prayer, preach particular redemption and reprobation, and scorn, as a figment of human invention, the doctrine of the apostolic succession,—the Trinitarian asserting belief in the three Persons of the Godhead to be essential,—and the Unitarian denying the divinity of Christ. Can it be matter of surprise that the poor heathen, bewildered by such a host of conflicting opinions expressed by persons calling themselves ministers of the same Lord, ambassadors of the same heavenly King, should treat the message of all with scorn, and abide still in their unbelief? It would be marvellous

were it otherwise. Marvellous if they who are ignorant of the very groundwork and rock of Christianity should be able to discriminate truth from error, to distinguish the real from the counterfeit, and comprehend all the nice theological distinctions which distract Christendom, and which even are a puzzle to Christians themselves. Such, too truly, is the miserable plight in which our divisions involve the heathen, and arrest the progress of Christianity; and the very men who herald to them the glad tidings of salvation, by the conflict of their teaching and usages, and by their disunion and discord, belie the terms of their message—peace on earth, and good-will to men. Were Christians, on the contrary, to solder their differences and to cease their strife; were they, by prayer and fasting, to settle the catholic faith, then, and, I fear, not till then, would they effectually go forth conquering and to conquer. Then, as in the ancient of days, when the apostles of the circumcision and the uncircumcision proceeded on their heaven-directed mission, the darkness of Gentile error would be dispelled by the blaze of divine truth; then the Crescent would succumb to the Cross, and the misshapen image of the Indian be broken and destroyed by its former votaries. No more the descendants of Ish-

mael would raise their hands against the sons of Isaac, but unite with us in grafting in again the children of promise, whom the thunders of Almighty wrath had severed as unfruitful branches from his ancient, holy, long-loved olive-tree. But this glorious and blessed consummation is a far-distant prospect, and is likely to continue so till a return is made to primitive truth and order.

During the three hundred years which succeeded the ascension of our blessed Lord, many great empires and kingdoms became the kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ: and upwards of three centuries have elapsed since the Reformation, and no nations have either been converted from heathenism, or have renounced the errors of Rome. Yet, humanly speaking, the facilities for both have been wonderfully increased. The art of printing has produced a vast circulation of the holy Scriptures. The possession of a great tract of India by the British has opened a wide door for the entrance of the gospel. Colonies have been formed in many quarters of the world by Christians. Numerous societies for the propagation of the gospel are in active operation; enormous sums of money are annually raised and professedly expended on foreign missions. Many, what are called gratifying reports are made of the progress

of Christianity. But what nations have actually been converted? Not India: not China: not Persia: not Turkey: not Egypt. I do not mean to deny that any people have embraced the faith, but that no national conversions have been effected similar to those of the three first ages, even though that most powerful auxiliary, the press, has been employed in the great and good cause. The same observations may be applied to countries prostrated under the influence of the Tridentine creed. Here and there a few solitary Protestant congregations may be found, but the grain of mustard seed has not become a great tree, neither hath the leaven leavened the whole lump. Italy, Austria, Spain, Portugal, France, and many other nations, have not thrown off the Roman yoke. Is it urged, that the overwhelming influence of the Papacy and Romish tyranny have smothered the Reformation? To this I answer, that before the conversion of Constantine almost all the Roman emperors and their subordinate officers persecuted the Christians to the utmost of their power; yet, in spite of all these efforts to extinguish the truth, Christianity ultimately triumphed. These are facts hard to be controverted. The gospel is the same now as ever, and it cannot, one would think, be the will of

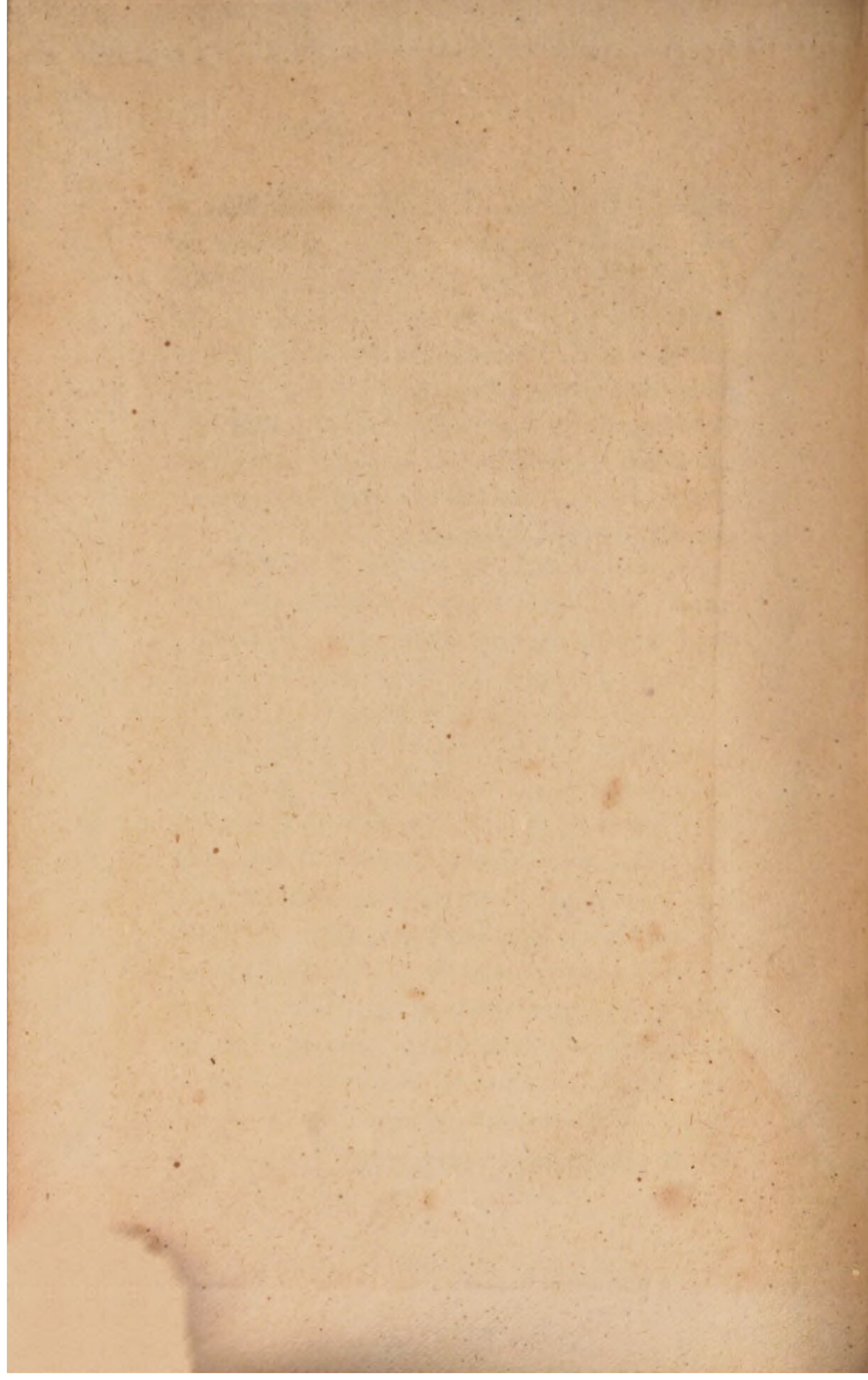
God that its extension should be arrested, or that an erroneous faith should so long prevail. We learn from the parable that he gave talents to all his servants, to some more and to others less, and that no one was without one at least. The right employment of these talents he left to them, and the neglect he punished. The cause, then, methinks, of this spiritual paralysis which hath seized upon the members of the church and hath cramped its energies, must in part be ascribed to the neglect of the talents by those to whom they were committed, and in part to the malice of the devil, who hath sown the tares of heresy and schism in the Lord's field. Though the supineness of the one and the errors of the other are without excuse, yet it ought to be looked upon as an instance of Divine favour and love, that under existing circumstances, a pause has taken place in what is commonly called the conversion of the heathen; for it is of little benefit to have rooted up error, except truth be planted in its stead; to abjure Roman fallacy and to adopt Socinian heresy; to abandon Mahometanism without embracing Christianity. For what shall it profit a man to be healed of one dangerous disease, if he fall into another; or to be cured entirely of every kind of malady except nourishment be administered to recruit his

wasted frame, and to sustain the vital spark? It matters not, if he dies, whether fever, consumption, or starvation has produced death. Suppose that the labours of all the missionaries of the various sectaries among the heathen were crowned with success, what then? Why people would indeed be drawn out from idolatry, but would sink into the slough of schism, and be inoculated with the virus of dissent; and thus the disease under which we unhappily labour at home, would more widely be diffused. Again, were free access given to sectarians into Popish countries, this would not be to extend the catholic faith, but to propagate all manner of divisions. I humbly conceive then, that in whatever light we view the violation of unity, whether as regards the heathen or the corrupted branches of the christian church, to it must be attributed the stagnation of the pure stream of gospel truth. The Holy Scriptures are not corrupted, but christianity is. God is the author of order, yet confusion abounds. He therefore who blasted the felicity of paradise must have gained the mastery over the posterity of Adam, and again have marred and destroyed the unity which the second Adam restored to the children of men. Seeing then, that it hath pleased the All-wise Ruler of human affairs to retain many kingdoms of the earth still in

heathen and Roman errors, we must believe that He hath thus ordered all things for the best. He hath granted to some nations emancipation from the yoke of Rome. He hath seen that liberty turned into licentiousness, and the light which radiated from the Bible, when liberated from the papal prison house, again almost put out, or at least mixed and corrupted by the artificial lights of fallible men: when these lesser lights have paled their lustre before the true light which came down from heaven, when the divisions of the church in Britain are healed, and her purity and catholicity restored, then shall she successfully speak peace to the heathen; then shall she effectually convince of their sins the people who now own the authority of the Roman bishop. She hath already done much in evangelizing the world, and scions from her ancient stock are lifted up in various quarters of the globe as ensigns for the nations, whereto witness that branch flourishing in America. Her noble liturgy translated into almost every known language, is gradually gaining upon the hearts and affections of people dwelling in the uttermost regions of the earth; and even now the Greek and the Arab join with us in worshipping God in the same form of sound words. Who that hath any love of God abiding in him will refuse to wish her prosperity? Who

will refuse to pray that her divisions may be healed, for the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom? and for this more especially are they of her communion bound to pray, lest to them our Saviour's words may be applied, "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Let all, then, strive and pray for the help of the Holy Spirit in this labour of love, to restore again to our distracted country the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and when these impediments are removed, these beams of schism are plucked out from our spiritual eyes, then shall we see clearly to extract the motes of heathen and Romish error from the eyes of our brethren without and within the pale of the christian church. Now indeed, we see through a glass darkly, and the time appears to us far distant when there shall be one fold under one shepherd. But however remote the prospect may appear, and though the times and the seasons are hid from us, yet there are signs in the christian world which all would do well to mark. The Papacy, for a time depressed by the iron hand of Napoleon, hath regained its elasticity; its energies are awakened and its agents are busily employed in their dark and crooked designs; noiseless and stealthy as the

serpent, the Jesuit labours in his vocation—like the mole, seen only by the convulsions he heaves up on the earth. It is, therefore, most especially needful that all should be on their guard. Again, christian reader, I beseech you peruse these pages with a spirit void of controversy, imploring the Holy Ghost to print in your hearts whatever is the truth, and to blot out whatever is erroneous. If the love of God be in you, you will love your brethren also; you will seek peace and ensue it.



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Aitchison, David

Liber Redivivus: or the booke of the Universall Kirke Re-Opened

Glasgow 1839

Polem. 1627 b

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